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JORDAN 3 Days \$170
EGYPT 4 Days \$79 see last page
MAZADA TOURS

NIS 4.20 (EILAT NIS 3.60)

Soldier killed in clash with Hizbullah – gunman slain

GOLANI Brigade soldier Staff-Sgt. Yair Tzafir, 19, was killed in a clash with Hizbullah gunmen north of the security zone yesterday afternoon. At least one of the gunmen was killed and another wounded.

The clash occurred while Tzafir's unit was on an initiated operation near Yatar, one of Hizbullah's main strongholds in south Lebanon.

The IDF Spokesman said the troops attacked a Hizbullah squad, hitting several of them before the soldiers returned to their bases.

One news agency report said as many as three gunmen were killed in the clash and subsequent artillery exchanges, although reports from the region said one was killed and another wounded.

Tzafir, from Kibbutz Gvat in the Jezreel Valley area, was apparently hit in the neck during the gunfight and died despite efforts to save him.

He is to be buried today at 3 p.m. at the kibbutz cemetery.

Reports from Lebanon said IAF helicopter gunships strafed

terrorist positions around Yatar and nearby Kafra and dropped smoke bombs to cover the soldiers' pullback.

IDF and South Lebanese Army gunners also blasted suspected targets north of the zone during and after the gunfight, sparking more prolonged artillery exchanges.

Hizbullah gunners, apparently supported by Amal forces, fired a salvo of Katyusha rockets at IDF and SLA positions in the Beit Leif region, inside the zone.

Reports from Lebanon said

DAVID RUDGE

several rockets fell on Beit Leif itself and a five-year-old boy was wounded. He was taken to the hospital in nearby Bint J'ail for treatment.

Hizbullah claimed it had thwarted an attempt by IDF troops to plant roadside bombs and mines along the road leading to Yatar, adding its men had spotted the IDF troops and opened fire at them.

The Yatar area has been a hotbed of terrorist activities in the

past, and has been used in the past as launching pads for attacks on IDF and SLA targets in the zone. The Golani Brigade operation marks at least the second time in the past few weeks that IDF troops have operated north of the security zone.

Golani troops were also involved in the previous incident when a unit from the brigade ambushed a Hizbullah patrol near Shakra, in the eastern sector, earlier this month.

A number of gunmen were said to have been killed or wounded

on that occasion, although there were no casualties among the Golani soldiers.

According to military sources, the IDF is carrying out numerous initiated operations inside and north of the zone to thwart terrorist attacks.

Such operations are in keeping with the military philosophy and tactics of OC Northern Command Maj.-Gen. Amiram Levine, who wants to confront the enemy as near to his lines as possible rather than inside the zone or near the northern border.

Levine has also made it clear on several occasions that he favors initiated operations to keep the enemy guessing.

Palestinian rejectionist groups, especially that of Ahmed Jibril, as well as Hizbullah have suffered relatively heavy casualties in clashes with the IDF recently. At least 16 gunmen are known to have been killed in the past few weeks, although the total number of casualties is believed to be much higher.

Shahak: Increased attacks in zone

Page 2



Lt. Oren Edri at the courtroom yesterday with his wife Bruria and attorney Zion Amir.

(Hanoach Grizetsky/Israel Sun)

Edri acquitted of training right-wingers, freed from jail

ALON PINKAS and HERB KEINON

LT. OREN Edri was acquitted yesterday of charges he trained right-wing activists in weapons knowing they were organizing an underground, but convicted of taking IDF explosives without authorization.

The conviction by the Jaffa Military Court was termed "technical" by the judges and Edri was freed last night.

Edri's acquittal on the most important charges was seen as a humiliating slap on the wrist for the General Security Service, which had singled him out several months ago as a central organizer of a Jewish terrorist underground in the making.

A senior security source said yesterday that such an underground was indeed developing, but was foiled by the GSS.

"We may have got the wrong guy, and that is very unfortunate and alarming, but this does not mean the underground cells did not exist," the source said.

The three-judge tribunal, presided over by Col. Mordechai Peled, determined that Edri, 23, a Nahal officer, did not train Elyashiv Keller in the military

use of explosives, nor did he relay classified information on military installations to Ido Elba.

Edri was also found not guilty of the charge of behavior unbecoming an officer.

The judges did not accept the defense's argument that statements were extracted from Edri by force, nor that his harsh imprisonment conditions or extraordinary interrogation methods caused him to give untrue statements. However, the court criticized the GSS for both the interrogation and the conditions in which Edri was kept throughout the investigation and until his trial.

"The court cannot understand the need to place a sack over his head ... nor the presence of rats in his cell," wrote Peled. The GSS, he added in the 45-page decision, "should not pursue interrogations at the expense of individual rights."

Edri was convicted of taking a brick of plastic explosive and a detonator from an army depot and giving it to Ya'acov Ben-David.

The judges said the offense was "technical" rather than criminal, and Peled noted "there was no proven intent to use them in a criminal manner."

Edri was sentenced to seven months' imprisonment, but was ordered released after the court took into account his five months' detention before trial and good behavior.

Jubilant family members and friends celebrated in the courtroom, while Zion Amir, Edri's attorney, called it "an excellent result."

Settlement leaders in Kiryat Arba reacted to the verdict with satisfaction and relief, but said the whole episode cast doubts on the authorities.

"The Oren Edri case is the severest indictment possible against the Rabin government," said Kiryat Arba lawyer and activist Elyakim Ha'etzi. "This will go down as the clearest sign that something is rotten within the government and that it has seeped into the GSS, the police, the State Attorney's Office, and

the IDF Judge Advocate-General," he said.

Ha'etzi said Kiryat Arba residents do not feel vindicated by the verdict, because they never felt guilty in the first place. "It is a feeling of satisfaction," he said.

"We have known the truth all along. Most of all it is a feeling of relief that an innocent man, for whom the IDF was his whole life, has not been sent to jail."

Bella Gonen, a member of the Kiryat Arba local council, said that along with the "tremendous feeling of relief," she is left with a bitter taste regarding the grief and distress caused Edri and "intense anger toward a government that is persecuting us."

Meanwhile, National Religious Party head Zevulun Hammer sent a letter to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin calling for an investigation into how "empty accusations" were pinned on Edri, and advised that the prime minister look into whether GSS agents involved in the case were "influenced by left-wing elements."

Last night, a party for Edri was held in his new home at Beit El.

No breakthrough expected on NPT

DAVID MAKOVSKY and news agencies

draw now from the West Bank would amount to totally forsaking the 135,000 Israelis there."

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin reacted last night in Tel Aviv to Ben-Eliezer's remarks by telling Channel One, "Sometimes a minister will speak nonsense. It's too bad."

Ben-Eliezer also told the institute's audience that as far as talks with Syria were concerned, Jerusalem will "naturally be prepared to recognize full Syrian sovereignty" over Mt. Hermon as part of a Golan withdrawal.

But he said it would be conditioned on Israel's maintaining an early-warning station there.

Talks with Syria, Page 2

EGYPTIAN President Hosni Mubarak is expected to ask Israel to lift the closure on the territories and resume talks with the Palestinians when he meets today in Cairo with Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

However, both Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa and Peres stood firm yesterday on their positions regarding the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Moussa yesterday outlined Mubarak's plans for the meeting, which will focus on the peace talks and the dispute between the two countries over signing the NPT. (Continued on Page 2)

TASE soars 7.7 percent

RACHEL NEIMAN

THE Tel Aviv Stock Exchange rose sharply yesterday, as investors breathed a collective sigh of relief at the news of the stock market tax's probable demise.

The market rose 7.7 percent to close at 174.67 on turnover of NIS 251m. Expectations were even higher at midday, when all heavy shares traded between 8.5% and 9% higher.

"The color has returned to our cheeks," said portfolio manager Eli Sudri of Mishtanim Sudri. "It's a day of euphoria."

"What is encouraging," said another TASE broker, "is that portfolio managers we had so heard from in months are calling."

Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel said yesterday's increases signaled the fact that "the bourse hates uncertainty." He said the most important thing for the country's decision-makers is to take consistent and clear policies, since long-term economic prosperity is the key to the success of the bourse.

At 12:30 p.m., excess demand stood at NIS 620m., of which NIS 345m. represented the Meretz trading and NIS 274m. the Karam index. The Maof index had risen 7.5% and the Two-Sided 6.3%.

By 2 p.m. the Two-Sided Index was up 8.4% to 176 and the Maof had risen 8.5% to reach 175, but closed later at 173. The Karam index closed 4.4% higher.

Sellers were mainly provident funds realizing profits in the afternoon.

"As of now speculators have reentered the arena. The question is will the general public join them?" said options portfolio manager Shalom Har-Oz of Storm Capital Markets. He predicted "a nervous period ahead" and said profit-taking may be expected today.

One clear trend yesterday was a return of investors to mutual funds, with midday demand at about NIS 400. While such movement indicated a change in the public's tastes in relation to the market, brokers were unable to say what part was institutional investor money and how much belonged to private investors. "The public has not yet returned in droves," said Sudri.

Because Israeli stocks traded in New York had soared 10% to 14% Monday night, some expected market forces to drive indexes up as much as 10% here.

One reason indexes did not reach the maximum level on the TASE was because money invested on Wall Street was from Israel.

TASE Report, Page 9



Busy brokers place orders on the stock exchange yesterday. (Hanoach Grizetsky/Israel Sun)

Shohat: No new levies planned

DAVID RUDGE and JOSE ROSENFELD

FINANCE Minister Avraham Shohat said yesterday that he did not intend to impose any new levies on the public to compensate for lost revenue from the stock exchange tax.

"We will look at the budget and ensure [it will be] balanced. I am not considering any ideas for any levy," Shohat said during a meeting with Jewish, Arab and Druse businesspeople in Nahariya.

Earlier, during a visit with Labor party activists in Daliat al-Carmel, the minister was asked about his decision to cancel the bourse tax.

"I'm not sorry about the process [of initiating the tax]. The tax was right and today I still believe that in principle a capital gains tax is just, but the process didn't succeed," Shohat told reporters.

"There is no doubt that I, as finance minister, and the cabinet failed to implement the [bourse tax] law in the right way and therefore I announced its cancellation."

Shohat was asked how he could continue in office when the public had lost faith in the Treasury's measures.

"I think that's a mistake. Some newspaper headlines, of one kind or another, do not determine public trust," Shohat replied.

"Public trust is based on faith in the economy, on employment,

boosting production, infrastructure and education," he added.

Police Minister Moshe Shahal yesterday called for the formation of an economic cabinet. Speaking to reporters on a tour of Sharon Prison, Shahal declined to answer directly when asked whether he thinks Shohat should be fired.

"We made a mistake and in the future should take a professional approach. There is a need for an economic cabinet with decision-making powers, having a backup of professional and academic advisers," Shahal said.

"The cabinet must draw conclusions and concern itself first and foremost with the problems of inflation, high interest, and [economic] growth."

Shahal denied he has ambitions to become finance minister. "I don't want the job. I'm happy with the job of police minister," he said.

According to Shohat, the elimination of the stock market tax means a NIS 400 million shortfall in tax revenues in this year's budget.

The Treasury is planning to review budget developments to clarify the actual funding sources that will be necessary to meet the budget deficit. Should the review show a shortfall in income, the Treasury will suggest cutting spending. (Continued on Page 2)

Ben-Eliezer: Most Israelis don't support continuation of peace process

HILLEL KUTTLER

WASHINGTON

MOST Israelis do not support the continuation of the peace process and we can't move one inch forward when the level of personal security has dropped to zero, Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer said here yesterday.

Negotiations with the Palestinians should be halted as long as the PLO does not rein in anti-Israel terrorism, Ben-Eliezer told Israeli journalists yesterday.

Ben-Eliezer later told a forum at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy that while he wants the peace process to continue, "not a single clause of the security component has been fulfilled by the Palestinians."

"As long as it is so, I don't feel there is any possibility to sit now and to continue to talk. I say also that this can be controlled by [PA Chairman Yasser] Arafat."

The entire peace process will collapse "unless Arafat will take charge," Ben-Eliezer said, adding that "to go on now and with-



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First family visits at Khyiam Prison

DAVID RUDGE

A GROUP of Lebanese civilians yesterday became the first for many years to meet with relatives detained in the El Khyiam jail inside the security zone in south Lebanon.

News agencies reported that the group of 12 people met with four inmates from the jail in accordance with a new agreement allowing each detainee to be visited by up to three relatives.

South Lebanese Army commander Gen. Antoine Lahad announced the move yesterday saying it followed an agreement with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The accord allows for relatives from north of the security zone as well as inside the zone to enter the region and meet inmates, provided the visits are coordinated beforehand with the ICRC and the authorities in the zone.

Lahad said relatives would also be allowed to correspond with in-

mates, although he stressed that all visits and exchanges of letters would be strictly controlled and supervised.

More than 250 people, most of them Shi'ites from inside and north of the zone, are believed to be held in the El Khyiam jail for involvement in terrorist activities.

Lebanese newspapers reported that under the agreement, 20 prisoners would be allowed to meet with relatives every week for the next three months.

The reports said Lebanese officials were informed of the Israeli decision to allow visits to El Khyiam prisoners by UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Lebanese parliament speaker Nabih Berri told reporters in Tyre yesterday that the agreement was a step in the right direction, although it did not solve "the fate of our heroes being held inside Israel."

Syria says ambassador returning for talks

HILLEL KUTTNER

WASHINGTON

SYRIA has informed the US its ambassador will return here this week to resume peace negotiations, an Israeli official said yesterday.

Syrian ambassador Walid Mualeh has spent most of this month in Damascus, putting on hold talks with his Israeli counterpart Itamar Rabinovich that were scheduled to resume last week.

But because "they've been telling that to the Americans for two weeks already," there is no telling when the talks will actually take place, the official said.

"We know only what the Syrians tell the Americans," the Israeli official said. "The proof will be in whether they come or not."

American officials believe Damascus has been stalling to obtain gestures in exchange for Mualeh's return here for the talks.

In Damascus, a government newspaper editorialized yesterday that the peace talks are in a crisis and the Arabs are losing interest because deals made so far with Israel have failed to bring peace to the region.

"The peace process is currently suffering from a big crisis which became clear through the dwindling popularity of the peace process among Arabs who felt the humiliation which resulted from

separate deals with Israel," the Syrian government daily *Tishreen* said.

It blamed Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's government for the failure and added: "In fact the policy of the Rabin government ... is responsible for leading the Washington talks to a deadlock."

"Rabin is the one who undermined the principles of the just and comprehensive settlement and wrecked a historic opportunity to bring peace and stability to the region."

Shmuel Segev adds from New York:

US-Syrian tension, meanwhile, has increased since President Clinton froze the assets of terrorist groups. While no one in Washington expects any immediate effects of Clinton's move, attention was shifted to Damascus, where President Assad is defying a US request to expel Fathi Shikaki, head of Islamic Jihad, which declared responsibility for the Beit Lid attack.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher phoned his Syrian counterpart and expressed "astonishment" at how Syria could in good faith negotiate peace with Israel and at the same time continue to harbor terrorist groups.

Autopsy ordered after death of Palestinian prisoner

JON IMMANUEL

A PALESTINIAN prisoner died two days ago in Farah prison near Nablus, an apparent suicide, and human rights groups yesterday demanded a delay in the autopsy until they find an independent doctor to attend it.

Nazim Imran Hussein, 18, was

arrested in Azoun, near Kalkilya, on December 26, suspected of aiding a Hamas cell, and was transferred to Farah prison.

The civil administration officer who visited the family said: "He was found dead in the prison bathroom with a rope around his neck." Dr. Ziaf Hussein, a physician and cousin of the dead man, told *The Jerusalem Post*.

"We don't think it is suicide and we are looking for a doctor to observe the autopsy," he said.

The Israeli authorities agreed to a one-day delay.

SOCIAL & PERSONAL

The weekly meeting of the English-speaking Jerusalem Rotary Club will take place today at 1 p.m. at the YMCA, King David Street. Prof. Ruth Cohn will speak on Buddhist Art in China.

In deep sorrow we announce the passing of our father, father-in-law and grandfather, the engineer

KURT GERSON

The funeral will take place today, Wednesday, Adar, 1, 5755, 12.05 at 14:00 at the Har Hamenuhot cemetery, Givat Shaul, Jerusalem.

Mourning by:

Son and daughter-in-law: Yoram and Yehudit Gerson
His granddaughter and her husband: Dorit and Amir Hochner
His grandchildren: Ran, Gil, and Tamar

Our dear aunt

GERTRUD OETINGER

has passed away.

The funeral will take place today, Wednesday, February 1, 1995 at 12 p.m. at the Yarkon Cemetery of the Trans-Samaria Highway.

The family

Shahak: Palestinian terrorist actions on the increase in southern Lebanon

IDF-Palestinian police tensions rise in Gaza

LIAT COLLINS

In answer to a question by Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu, who asked why action was not being taken against the terrorists in Syria, Shahak apparently said the IDF carries out surveillance of all places where there is terrorist activity, but Syria is not considered a target for anti-terrorist activity according to accepted criteria.

Discussing security within Israel, Shahak said he objected to freeing Palestinian prisoners because they serve as a pool of potential terrorists. He also said the IDF had no operative plans for the withdrawal from Arab popu-

lation centers. He reportedly added, however: "If the security arrangements are the same as those in Jericho and Gaza it will be difficult to go in to make arrests or capture wanted [terrorists] for interrogation."

Fatah members have carried out more than one attack since the signing of the Oslo Accords, he said, contradicting previous government reports that all subsequent terror attacks have been carried out by Hamas or Islamic Jihad.

Tension in Gaza has increased

between the IDF and the Palestinian Police and within Jewish communities in Gush Katif. The closure has increased the tension, but Shahak believes it is useful as a security measure. The Palestinian Police could do more to prevent terrorists entering Israel, but cannot stop all terrorists from getting through, Shahak reportedly said. He was responding to a question by Labor MK Ra'anan Cohen who talked about "the export of murderers from Gaza."

Shahak noted, however, that after the Beit Lid bombing, the Palestinian Police did make a large number of arrests in Gaza

and collected some weapons and inflammatory material. The steps incurred a reprimand from Islamic Jihad head Fathi Shikaki in Syria, he noted.

"I can't say nothing is being done, but in my opinion more could be done [by the Palestinian Police]," he was quoted as saying.

During yesterday's meeting, Likud MK Benny Begin revealed another classified report. This one was from the General Command's Planning Department to the Foreign Ministry. It apparently lists Palestinian violations of the agreements with Israel.

Next to many of the clause are the responses: "he matter is not being dealt with."

Arafat: PA thwarted bomber

DAVID RUDGE

THE Palestinian Police recently thwarted a suicide bomb attack in Israel by a 15-year-old who had been recruited by Hamas, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat reportedly told Democratic Arab Party MKs yesterday.

MKs Abdul Wahab Darawshe and Taleb a-Sanna said the details came to light during a meeting with Arafat in Gaza yesterday.

A-Sanna said Arafat informed them that the PA police had thwarted another two attempts prior to the Beit Lid bombing.

He told Israel Radio that the PA police had uncovered the plot while it was still in the planning stages. A-Sanna said the details were revealed while they were discussing the recent events which had halted the peace talks.

The DAP MK said Arafat had reiterated his concern over the "collective punishment" being imposed on residents of Gaza by the ongoing closure of the region. A-Sanna said Arafat complained that the closure was mainly hurting those who supported the peace process and, in turn, was helping to strengthen extremist rejectionist elements.



Palestinians shop in Jerusalem for basak, a bread special to the Moslem holy month of Ramadan.

(Brian Handler)

Palestinians start fast early

BILL HUTMAN and JON IMMANUEL

FOR the first time ever, Ramadan began on a different day in the territories than in Jordan yesterday, as the PA-appointed Jerusalem mufti declared the start of the fast month a full day ahead of its declaration in Jordan.

"The Palestinians control Al Aksa, and no longer take their orders from the Jordanians," said Mufti of Jerusalem Akram Sabri, as the PA further exerted its newfound influence over the Moslem religious apparatus in Jerusalem.

The Jerusalem mufti traditionally announces the start of Ramadan, which depends on the sighting of the new moon. In accordance with the decision of the Islamic religious authorities in Jordan.

This year, however, the mufti ignored the Jordanians and waited for Saudi Arabia to announce that Ramadan would begin yesterday, then followed suit. In Jordan, Ramadan begins today.

The Palestinian announcement, made independently of the Jordanians, demonstrates that "Al Aksa mosque," where the mufti sits, "is controlled by the Palestinian Authority," PA Chairman Yasser Arafat said.

An announcement by Arafat quoted in the *Al-Quds* daily pointed out that "For the first time in the history of the Palestinian nation, we announce to the Arab and Islamic world, the witnessing of the Ramadan new moon from Al-Aksa Mosque."

In fact, the Saudis announced the appearance of the crescent moon first, but the Jordanian mu-

ftiological authority challenged them to prove they had sighted it. Traditionally, the Saudis and the Jordanians compete over the start of Ramadan as well as supervision of the Moslem holy places in Jerusalem.

Arafat reached agreement with Jordan's King Hussein last week concerning the future of Jerusalem, and therefore might have shown more, not less, readiness to follow Jordan. In the past, the Saudis' lunar observations have only been followed in Gaza.

Muhammed Abu Sardaneh, the head of the religious law department inside the PA Justice Ministry, announced that the new moon heralding the beginning of the fast month was observed Monday night, two days earlier than expected.

Jordan and the the Palestinian Authority have been at odds over the control of Al-Aksa since the signing last year of the Israeli-Jordanian peace accord. Afterwards, the Jordanians and PA appointed separate Jerusalem muftis.

The Ramadan decision was seen as a clear signal the PA-appointed mufti was in control. The Jordanian-appointed mufti did not even take part in the decision on when the holiday would begin.

Gaza donors discuss needs

JON IMMANUEL

REPRESENTATIVES of donor countries meeting in Gaza to discuss ways to spur Gaza's development said yesterday they would get more involved in projects with Palestinians.

Palestinians asked donors to simply procedures for approving projects, increase their presence in local offices, and import more Palestinian goods. Israel was asked to facilitate the flow of necessary capital goods and to support economic growth.

The two-day conference ended yesterday.

The donors said they were worried that the Palestinian Authority is not going to achieve its tax collection targets, as the economy of Gaza continues to deteriorate due to closures and the bombing attacks which prompted them.

However, the conference ended with decisions to create working groups on different sectors of development which would include donors, the UN, the World Bank, and Palestinians.

Economics Minister Ahmed Oreia told *The Jerusalem Post* that "the issue was how to start the flow of assistance. This way they can start immediately."

Oreia said that tax collection was proceeding but "not very well."

Settlers try to man posts

HERB KEINON

OVER the past 10 days, settlers in the territories have twice tried to temporarily man positions vacated by the IDF, to get the soldiers to return to the posts.

The most recent case occurred Monday night at an outpost near the village of Jeet, just northeast of Kedumim on the road leading to Nablus.

A number of Kedumim residents went there to man the post, but were evacuated a few hours later by IDF troops.

Settlers in the region claimed an arrangement was reached with the IDF whereby they would man the outposts during certain hours of the day, and the IDF would man them the rest of the time.

The IDF, however, denied that such an agreement was made, and the spokesman said settlers are not allowed to carry out security functions outside of their settlements. The spokesman said that a "wide variety" of steps are being taken to ensure the security of Kedumim residents.

The spokesman would not say whether the IDF has gone back to the post, saying that troop movements are classified information.

Jews barred from Machpela

SEVERAL dozen Jews tried to pray at the Machpela Cave in Hebron yesterday on the first day of Ramadan, a day it is closed to Jewish worshipers. Police prevented them from doing so and also barred them from praying outside the complex, terming it an "illegal gathering."

The worshipers arrived in two buses from Ra'anana to pray at the site and to show support with local Jewish residents, but the cave was closed to Jewish worshipers, based on arrangements drawn up

several months ago which allocate certain days of the year—such as yesterday—to prayers only by members of one religion.

When the visitors tried to pray outside, near the Settlers' Restaurant, they were told by soldiers they were involved in an "illegal gathering."

Hebron residents said they were not told the cave would be off limits yesterday, adding that it was inconceivable that Jews would not be allowed to pray outside the cave. (Ilim)

NPT

(Continued from Page 1)

Moussa told reporters the peace process is going through "a very dangerous and delicate time." But he said Israel's talks with Syria and the Palestinians were not at an impasse.

On the nuclear issue, Moussa said there was no change in Egypt's stance, which he called "specific and firm," against resigning the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty unless Israel also does so.

Yesterday, *Ha'aretz* said Israel may ease its longstanding opposition to the treaty to mollify Egypt. The paper said Peres might offer "a gesture" during

talks with Mubarak, but gave no details.

Asked about the report Peres said: "I don't think it is a matter of gestures. Israel has a long-standing position...Egypt in fact has complied with it, and I do not expect a major change," he said, after speaking at a high school in Tel Aviv.

"I'll tell the Egyptian leaders that we are the only nation in the world where a number of countries publicly threaten to annihilate us," Peres said on Israel Radio.

"Their suspicions are our deterrence. They are afraid and that's their right. They should be scared," Peres said.

SHOHAT

(Continued from Page 1)

Officials also suggested that the Treasury could increase the amount of US loan guarantee funds used to cover budget spending from \$600m. a year to \$900m. Another possibility that will be explored to increase revenues is further improving tax collection.

The Knesset is today expected to hear a bill proposed by Likud MK Ariel Weinstein to legislate a law canceling the stock market tax. "In view of the zigzags in the government's decision-making process each correct decision must be anchored in law," Weinstein said yesterday.

New corps commanders appointed

CHIEF of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Amnon Shahak has appointed several new corps commanders, whose appointments go into effect over the next three months.

Col. Dan Harel was appointed OC Artillery Corps; Col. Michael Dayan was appointed OC Ordnance Corps; Col. Dan Nadiv was appointed OC Maintenance

Corps; Col. Eliezer Toledano was appointed OC Engineering Corps. All four corps commanders will be promoted to brigadier-general.

In addition, it was announced that Brig.-Gen. Yitzhak Eitan has been appointed OC Gaza Strip.

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New Israeli Opera loses NIS 9 million in funding cut

Israel Festival and two theater groups slashed in budget

SCIENCE, Communications, and Arts Minister Shulamit Aloni dropped a bomb yesterday on The New Israeli Opera (NIO), the Israel Festival, the Haifa Children's Theater Festival and Good Neighbor Festival, which are the sole victims of an NIS 10.75 million funding cut.

The NIO will lose NIS 9 million, the Israel Festival NIS 1.3 million, and the Haifa festivals NIS 450,000.

"We decided to confine the cuts to well-established institu-

tions in the three major cities so that damage to arts activities in other areas of the country will be minimized," said Aloni. "It's our hope that the mayors, who may know a better road to the Treasury than we do, will see lobbying for culture as their civic duty."

Tel Aviv Mayor Romi Milo said the cuts are tantamount to a death sentence on the NIO, adding that "The Opera belongs to

the nation and so it is the government's duty to keep it going."

NIO general manager Uri Ofer withheld comment, saying only that the board of governors would meet in extraordinary session on February 6 to discuss the matter.

Israel Festival artistic director Micha Lewensohn reacted with outrage to the cut, which "represents 30% of our public funding,

HELEN KAYE

It is a dreadful, irresponsible, and unfair decision and I hope that Minister Aloni will have the courage to reverse it ...

"Like other festivals worldwide, the Israel Festival concludes artistic agreements far in advance. The festival is in May and by now most agreements are

in place. This unfortunate decision will destroy the festival's credibility and the very high reputation it enjoys abroad."

Haifa Mayor Amram Mitzna demanded in a protest letter to Aloni "that you review your priorities ... and find a way to transfer the promised funds."

Aloni explained that, in accordance with recent government cutbacks across the board, her

arts and culture budget was cut by NIS 7 million. A further NIS 4 million will be transferred from ministry funds to develop Mediterranean music, as demanded by a group of MKs calling themselves the Social Lobby.

Protesting what she termed an inverted pyramid of priorities, the minister added that "Culture has never had a lobby in the Knesset and if [the ministry] has

achieved anything in the last two years, it's because we've pushed."

In 1993 Aloni set up nine public commissions to report on the country's arts institutions and to determine an appropriate level of funding. As a result of their findings the 1994 budget was increased to NIS 218 million, of which NIS 177 million actually landed in ministry coffers. This year the ministry requested NIS 277.4m., of which NIS 217 million have been approved.



A police dog sniffs for explosives yesterday on a search for illegal workers near Jerusalem. (Issac Harari)

Dogs will sniff out explosives

DOGS trained to sniff out explosives were used for the first time yesterday by Jerusalem police.

The dogs were used during a nationwide operation largely aimed at locating Palestinians in Israel illegally despite the closure.

Some 254 Palestinians, as well as 58 Israeli employers who had hired the illegal workers were detained, police announced after the operation.

Police spokesmen emphasized that the dogs were not used to track down or detain Palestinians, but accompanied officers to help search for explosives.

Lod police yesterday arrested 21 Arab residents of the territories in Israel illegally. Police said the workers' employers helped

them enter and can expect to be fined NIS 2,000 per worker.

In Kfar Sava yesterday, a building contractor from the Triangle village of Tira was fined NIS 16,000 for employing eight illegal laborers. Another employer from Wadi Ara was also fined NIS 8,000 for hiring four illegal workers.

Meanwhile, police announced that regional council heads in the central region may decide to erect security fences around towns which border the Green Line as an additional safety precaution.

The move follows a conference

Monday evening in which council heads, police, Border Police, Ministry of Defense, and Home Front Command representatives discussed boosting security.

The meeting was arranged some time ago, following Police Minister Moshe Shaleh's visit to the area to examine security arrangements, but last week's bombing at Beit Lid emphasized the urgent need for new precautions.

Many towns border the Green Line and council heads complained recently that they do not have sufficient security guards to prevent the entry of unwanted Arabs and possible terrorists from surrounding villages. Police, they complained, do not patrol the areas sufficiently.

Wiretap suspects must justify need to see unrelated evidence

THE High Court of Justice has given alleged wiretappers Rafi Friedman and Ya'acov Tsur 15 days to explain why they should be allowed to receive material from police investigations not directly related to their case.

The court also strongly recommended that Friedman and Tsur's trial not be postponed until a final ruling on this issue, as Tel Aviv District Court Judge Zecharia Caspi had decided. Since the Friedman-Tsur trial is only at the stage of preliminary arguments, the justices said, there is no reason for such a delay.

In a rare departure from prece-

dent, the show-cause order, issued in response to a petition by the state, included the reasons for its issuance. Normally, interim decisions are given with no explanation.

The reasons related to Friedman and Tsur's argument that the High Court had no authority to hear the petition, which challenged Caspi's ruling that the state had to give Friedman and Tsur all of the documents from four parallel police investigations into other wiretapping cases.

In their ruling, Justices Dov Levine, Eliezer Goldberg and Zvi Tal agreed that usually, procedural decisions by a lower court made in the course of a trial are not subject to the High Court's scrutiny. However, they said, because of the "exceptional and complex circumstances of the issue under discussion," they decided to break their normal rule and hear the case.

The justices made it clear during the preliminary hearing that their concern was that if the material were transferred when it should not have been, the damage would be irreversible.

Final draft of Dead Sea Works Concession Law approved

THE final draft of the Dead Sea Works Concession Law was approved by the joint panel of the Knesset Finance and Interior committees yesterday. The bill is expected to come up for second and third reading this week, just one week after its first reading was approved.

The law would oblige the Dead Sea Works to abide by the National Planning and Construction and the Business Licensing laws,

but provides an escape clause for environmental and other regulations which conflict with its long-standing concession. The joint panel recommended ordering planning authorities to take the concession into account when deciding whether to issue a construction or planning permit.

The bill has aroused vocal op-

position from the Environment Ministry, which called it "disastrous," and environmental groups.

Several MKs also voiced concern about the law which allows the company to continue to enjoy basically extra-territorial status. The Finance and Industry and Trade ministries have consistently supported the bill claiming it is essential to prevent harming the company's output and exports.

Aloni's budget cuts are designed to shock

COMMENT
HELEN KAYE

what Aloni wants in the absence of a powerful arts lobby in the Knesset. The mayors all have voters to answer to, and the festivals, apart from their intrinsic artistic value to our cultural life, bring in a lot of business.

All three festivals and the opera are very high-profile institutions, which attract a lot of positive attention abroad. Perhaps the minister hopes the resultant egg on the national face if all founder, or stagger at the very

least, will create the desired results.

And perhaps even Aloni's timing is intentional. The Children's Theater Festival is in April, the Israel Festival in May, and the opera season has been set and contracts signed for more than a year. Closing the purse now means maximum disruption, because broken contracts mean financial penalties.

Maybe these near-mortal

wounds in sensitive areas will galvanize the government into showing culture and the arts a little higher up the totem pole - but desirable and essential as this is, it's unlikely given past precedents and current fiscal anxieties.

If these cuts spark a serious public debate, goose private and public corporations into some serious arts sponsorship, and make government realize that the cultural life of a country is its heart and so deserves support, then Aloni will have achieved her aim.

But the cost may be much too high. You don't amputate the leg to cure a limp.

Beit Lid victim takes turn for the worse

JUDY SIEGEL

ASSAF Ben-Or, the 18-year-old soldier who last week showed a "miraculous" recovery from his wounds in the Beit Lid terror attack, yesterday took a sudden turn for the worse.

Doctors at Hadassah-University Hospital in Jerusalem's Ein Kerem yesterday discovered that Ben-Or was bleeding inside his brain. They rushed him to the operating room in serious, unstable condition.

Last week, doctors decided not to remove from his brain a number of fragments resulting from the explosion, fearing the surgery would cause damage. Ben-Or, from Kiryat Bialik, nevertheless regained consciousness, spoke to relatives and was able to get out of bed; he was then listed in good condition.

Nineteen bomb victims are still hospitalized, including eight soldiers in serious and three in satisfactory condition.

Meanwhile, a public committee's assessment of medical care given to the Beit Lid casualties yesterday gave good marks to all the authorities involved. The assessment, by Israel Defense Forces chief medical officer Dr. Yehoshua Shemer, included hospital directors, Magen David Adom officials and senior medical corps experts.

On Monday, an MDA official had said that the first-aid organization was so short-staffed that it had to send clerks instead of medics to treat the Beit Lid wounded.

Medical treatment of victims was "intelligent and maximum in such tragic circumstances," said Shemer. MDA and security forces reached the site quickly and treated the seriously wounded to the best of their ability, Shemer maintained, and the quick evacuation saved a number of soldiers' and civilians' lives.

In the first wave, victims were rushed to Hillel Yaffe, Laniado and Meir Hospitals. Later, those who needed specialized trauma care were moved to tertiary-care (highest-level) hospitals, and four were flown by helicopter to Jerusalem.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Driver killed in collision with truck

One person was killed and two were seriously injured near Kfar Kassem yesterday when a truck crashed into a commercial vehicle about 6 a.m. The truck ran a stop sign and hit the commercial vehicle, whose driver, Eitan Shoker, 18, was killed on impact. The road was closed for two hours while emergency crews worked at the scene. Police revoked the truck driver's license for 90 days pending further investigation. *Itm*

Train fares up 6% on some lines

Train fares on some lines went up today by an average of six percent. The increase in fares reflects increased operating costs in the last few months, but fares are still 10 to 20 percent lower than those on buses.

Prices of monthly passes and multiple-ride tickets will increase proportionately on March 1.

Bezek unveils 'smart card'

Bezek yesterday unveiled its first "smart card" containing a computer chip that can be "filled" with money credits and other information. The card will be tested at Bar-Ilan University, where students, faculty and visitors will be able to buy the cards and make phone calls, purchase soft drinks, send faxes and use copy machines on campus with money credited to them directly from their bank account.

Eventually, smart cards are expected to be introduced for a variety of uses throughout the country to replace some cash transactions and even hold medical records.

Jewish Agency official to head JDC-Israel

Arnon Manter, currently director of the Jewish Agency's aliyah department, has been appointed the next director of JDC-Israel. He will assume his new position in the summer, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, announced yesterday in New York.

JDC-Israel works with the Israeli government and public organizations to help disadvantaged population groups such as new immigrants. Prof. Jack Habib, the present director, who was seconded to the Joint for four years, will return to his former position as director of the JDC Brookdale Institute of Gerontology. He will also serve as chief planning adviser to the Joint for its worldwide operations.

Weiss: Land returns must be legislated

Knesset Speaker Shevah Weiss told the plenum yesterday that he had informed Prime Minister Rabin that land should not have been returned to Jordan before legislation was passed.

Weiss praised Likud MK Michael Eitan who brought up the issue on Monday as an urgent motion. Yesterday Eitan received a letter from the Attorney-General's Office clarifying that "territorial procedures involving the exchange of land should be carried out via legislation."

Gasoline prices rise by half a percent

Gasoline prices rose last night at midnight by 0.5 percent. Some of the new prices are: 96 octane, NIS 2.15 per liter (up from NIS 2.14); lead-free 95 octane, NIS 2.09 per liter (NIS 2.08). Light industrial oil is now 1 percent cheaper and heavy industrial oil is 2.5 percent cheaper.

Tel Aviv casino raided, arrest 31

Police detectives raided a Tel Aviv casino yesterday, arresting 31 people, including players and managers, who were in the building on Hamaagor Street.

After questioning, all but nine dealers were released. Police said the casino had started operating recently, and they found roulette and blackjack tables and cash. It was the second casino raid in the past week. *Itm*

Kessar puts road deaths in perspective

HAIM SHAPIRO

ISRAEL has fewer road deaths per capita than some developed countries, Transport Minister Yissel Kessar said yesterday.

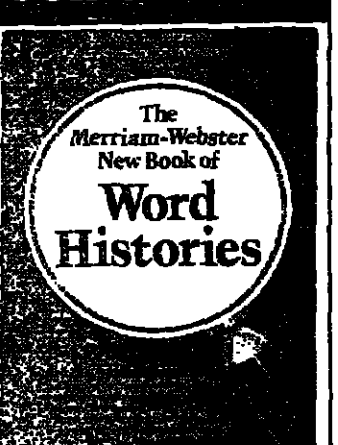
In a list of 23 countries, Israel was fifth from the bottom, Kessar said, with more road fatalities per capita than Japan, Holland, Britain and Norway, but fewer than Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Belgium, Spain, Australia, and Finland.

Kessar, who was speaking in preparation for a debate on the human factor in road accidents, to be held in the Knesset today. He stressed that the relatively positive figures in comparison with other countries should not make Israelis complacent: more than 500 people meet their deaths on the road in Israel annually.

However, in 1994 there was a 5% drop in casualties, compared to 1993, although the number of vehicles increased by 6%, to 1,360,000. However, there was a 4% rise in the number of fatalities.

According to ministry figures, 4% of accidents were caused by failure to obey traffic signals or by tail-gating. Only 5.5% percent were caused by speeding.

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OJ witness called liar, 'groupie'

LOS ANGELES (AP) - In an unparalleled second opening statement, the prosecutor in the O.J. Simpson case attacked the credibility of a potential defense witness, calling the woman "a known liar and a Simpson case groupie."

After Deputy District Attorney Marcia Clark made her brief rebuttal statement, the prosecution presented its first witness, Sharyn Gilbert, an emergency dispatcher for the Los Angeles Police Department who handled a call from the Simpson home on New Year's Day 1989.

On Monday, Superior Court Judge Lance Ito punished defense attorneys for hiding witnesses from the prosecution. And in a move he called virtually unprecedented, Ito decided to allow prosecutors to make an additional 10 minutes of opening remarks yesterday to address the defense transgressions.

Legal experts said Ito's decision to allow Clark to reopen her statement was unprecedented in criminal cases and will probably be used as an element of an appeal if the jury finds Simpson guilty.

Simpson, 47, a pro-football Hall of Famer turned actor, has pleaded innocent to charges he murdered his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her waiter friend, Ronald Goldman, outside Ms. Simpson's Brentwood condominium on June 12.

Clark used only about half of her allotted 10 minutes yesterday to rebut some parts of defense attorney Johnnie Cochran Jr.'s opening statement.

Clark discussed alleged inconsistencies in the statement of Mary Anne Gorchas, one of several surprise witnesses mentioned last week in Cochran's opening statement. Gorchas claimed she saw four men - at least two of them Hispanics - running from near the crime scene the night Ms. Simpson and Goldman were slain.

Clark said Gorchas told a friend she wasn't even in the neighborhood of Ms. Simpson's condo on the night of the murders.

She called Gorchas "one of those people who comes out of the woodwork."



Deserted village - the flooded road leading to the church square in Givet, northeastern France yesterday after the residents were evacuated when the rising Meuse river overflowed its banks and flooded the region. (AP)

120,000 Europeans flee floods

AMSTERDAM (Reuters) - Over 120,000 people have been forced from their homes by some of the worst floods in northern Europe for 60 years and tens of thousands more were told to leave yesterday as water levels rose relentlessly.

Freak weather has allowed torrential rainstorms to sweep across the continent this month, causing widespread chaos and millions of dollars worth of damage.

Europe's great rivers like the Seine, the Meuse and the Rhine are in spate and commercial shipping has been banned along many stretches for fear of overwhelming, painfully stretched defenses.

In some places in the Netherlands, the Rhine is only inches away from causing a catastrophe, officials say.

Around 80,000 people have been evacuated from towns along the Dutch Rhine and up to 40,000 others have left areas around rivers in the southern Netherlands, Belgium and Germany.

Another 140,000 were ordered out of their homes in east Netherlands yesterday afternoon.

The biggest civilian evacuation in more than 40 years is under way in the Netherlands and at least 27 people have died in floods in France, Germany and the Low Countries.

The Dutch meteorological agency is forecasting more rain for yesterday, with strong winds increasing the threat to the country's system of dikes.

Cars, buses, army trucks, caravans, tractors, trailers and bicycles crowded on to soaking roads in the Netherlands, forming refugee columns reminiscent of World War II.

"It's a gigantic exodus," said Rob Weeda, spokesman at the Arnhem crisis centre coordinating the country's largest civilian evacuation since 1953.

Prime Minister Wim Kok, speaking in parliament in a televised nationwide address, expressed profound sympathy with those affected, saying Queen Beatrix would visit the areas today and tomorrow morning.

The catastrophe has prompted a row in the Netherlands over persistent delays in strengthening the nation's dikes.

No cost estimates exist for the latest floods, but the scale of the Dutch evacuation alone suggests it will be far in excess of the 250 million guilders (\$147 million) worth of damage caused by the last big Dutch floods in December 1993.

Meteorologists say the absence this year of the usual cold, heavy air pockets over northwestern Europe - due to complex pressure variations in the upper atmosphere - is allowing warm, wet air from the Atlantic to sweep unimpeded over the continent.

Heavy rains towards the end of 1994 had already left ground water levels high and melting snow has compounded the problem in some areas.

The Rhine, which reached a record 10.69 metres in Cologne on Monday, receded a shade to 10.65 metres and was continuing to fall slowly every hour.

The floods, which began in Germany last week, had submerged large parts of Cologne's old town after spilling over barriers.

Officials in states along the Rhine have begun accusing each other of poor management and selfish action in their response to the floods.

But it became increasingly clear that decades of forcing the Rhine into an ever-tighter corset have turned it into a massive funnel that can easily overflow.

"We have been raping nature for 40 years," said Klaudia Marfini, environment minister in Rhineland-Palatinate state where the Mosel and middle stretches of the Rhine overflowed.

US terror trial defense says client entrapped

NEW YORK (AP) - A Sudanese immigrant accused of masterminding a terrorist conspiracy to blow up New York City landmarks was manipulated and entrapped by a government informer, his lawyer said yesterday.

Opening statements continued yesterday in the nation's largest terrorism case ever. Twelve Muslim fundamentalists are charged with planning a terror campaign in a bid to force the United States to change its Middle East policy.

The indictment says that Egyptian Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman was the spiritual leader of the group, and Siddig Ibrahim Siddig Ali, a Sudanese, masterminded the actual plot.

Siddig Ali's attorney, Jerry Tritz, told the jury yesterday that his client was controlled by the government's leading witness, Emad Salem, a former Egyptian army officer who was working as an informant for the FBI.

"Siddig Ali was entrapped," Tritz said. "Siddig Ali did engage in conduct which all of you will find terribly offensive. The clock cannot be turned back."

"But at whose bidding were these terrible acts performed?" Tritz accused Salem of manufacturing and orchestrating the terror plot.

Each of the 12 defense lawyers - one for each defendant - was to give opening statements. So far, the defense lawyers have attacked Salem for his activities once he infiltrated Abdel-Rahman's inner circle and secretly taped his conversations with the defendants.

Salem surprised prosecutors soon after the men were arrested when he revealed he had also secretly recorded his FBI handlers and had passed along information to the Egyptian government.

In his opening statement, Assistant US Attorney Robert Khuzami acknowledged that the government had paid Salem \$1 million to infiltrate the sheik's inner circle and record his conversations.

Khuzami said the plot to blow up the United Nations, New York City headquarters, and two tunnels and a bridge connecting Manhattan with New Jersey in a single "day of terror" was part of a broader conspiracy in "a case about war" against the United States.

Prosecutors say the Feb. 26, 1993, bombing of the World Trade Center was also part of the conspiracy. Three followers of Abdel-Rahman and a fourth man were convicted last year in the bombing and were sentenced to life in prison without parole.

The defendants also allegedly plotted to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and kidnap former President Nixon and Henry Kissinger. They face life in prison if convicted.

Abdel-Rahman, who is blind and diabetic, chuckled as the government outlined its case for the jury.

His attorney, Lynne Stewart, said the 56-year-old Islamic fundamentalist may have disagreed with US policies but never conspired to harm the country. She said he came to America in 1990 to escape persecution in Egypt, where he was arrested and treated brutally for his outspokenness.

"Dr. Abdel-Rahman came here to preach, to have a pulpit, to speak freely and practice his religion without ending up in jail and guess what, he ended up in jail," Stewart said.

Prosecutors said the day of mass bloodshed was intended to punish the United States for its support of Israel and Egypt.

Tenacious Chechens hold their ground

GROZNY (Reuters) - Russian forces kept up their bombardment of Chechen positions in the breakaway region's capital Grozny yesterday, but independence fighters fought back without losing ground.

The devastated city, under fierce attack by the Russians for more than four weeks, echoed with the boom of Russian big guns which rained shells down on the Minutka district in the city centre where Chechen guerrillas are still active.

Russian news agencies also reported shelling of the southern suburbs of Chernorechiye and Novye Aldy, largely civilian districts, consistently targeted since January 26 though residents say Chechen fighters hold no positions there.

Battles were also reported at the main railway station and near Khankala airport just outside the city.

The official Itar-Tass news agency in Moscow said artillery fire had been stepped up since yesterday morning as Russian forces prepared for a "conclusive stage" of their campaign to break the North Caucasus territory's bid for independence.

Other battles have also been reported in Samashki, about 35 km (20 miles) west of Grozny along a road which many refugees have taken to flee the fighting into neighboring Ingushetia.

Reuters correspondent Richard Balmforth, who passed through Samashki early yesterday, saw a Russian armored personnel carrier lying by the road, apparently torn apart by an anti-tank weapon or grenade launcher.

Chechen fighters said the personnel carrier was part of a convoy which had rumbled through the region towards Grozny on Monday.

The Russian government's press service said moves were under way to prepare for the final stage of the military operation but Chechens remained defiant.

It said the "resistance of the illegal armed formations" was not weakening.

The fight by separatist President Dzhokhar Dudayev's forces looked certain to increase Kremlin discomfort. President Boris Yeltsin said publicly two weeks ago that the military side of the campaign was in its final stage.

Military experts say it is clear the Chechen fighters still control strategic parts of the city, including Minutka and positions south of the Suezha river.

In a sign of the military cost of the campaign, launched on December 11, Interfax news agency quoted a Defense Ministry source as saying 608 Russian ground and airborne troops have been killed and about 2,250 had been wounded.

The stiff resistance of the Chechen fighters, launched from basements and backstreets of the shattered city, has dashed Russian hopes of quickly taking the city after the capture of the presidential palace on January 19.

Ecuador said accepting ceasefire in Peru war

QUITO (AP) - Ecuador said yesterday it had accepted a ceasefire with Peru to seek a peaceful end to border clashes that have killed dozens of soldiers. But Peru later said it had not yet accepted the truce.

Ecuador's President Sixto Duran-Ballan said his representative to a diplomats' meeting in Brazil would not take part in talks later yesterday if Peru did not agree in advance to a halt in hostilities in the remote jungle region.

"The only thing left for Peru to do is to fix the hour ... that the cease-fire enters into effect," Duran-Ballan said. "We will sit down to talk the moment there is an unconditional cease-fire."

But Rosa Jimenez, a spokeswoman for Peru's Foreign Ministry, said in Lima that the Peruvian government would propose that both countries immediately resume marking the border.

In Quito, a foreign ministry spokesman said earlier yesterday the cease-fire would take effect at noon (1700 GMT). The reported accord was reached through the mediation of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the United States, it said.

Peru, Ecuador and the four countries would form a commission to monitor a cease-fire, the ministry said. Further details on the truce proposal weren't immediately available.

THE JERUSALEM POST

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Car suicide bomber killed 40, hurt 286

ALGIERS (AP) - The suicide bomber whose explosive-laden car killed 40 people in a downtown street appeared to be attempting a direct strike at the main police station, Algiers newspapers said yesterday.

The stolen car blew up yesterday afternoon in front of the police station on a major commercial street crowded with people preparing for the Islamic holiday of Ramadan. The bombing, by far the worst during a three-insurgency by Moslem militants, wounded 286 people, 76 of them still hospitalized yesterday.

President Liamine Zeroual visited some of the injured at Mustapha Hospital. State TV showed him trying to comfort a woman who told him through tears, "Do something. We are the innocents."

Zeroual reiterated his intention to hold presidential elections this year despite the violence and despite opposition from all main political parties, including the outlawed fundamentalist movement.

The president, installed by military authorities without an election, also vowed to "fight terrorism until it is eradicated."

"This inhuman action, aimed at innocent citizens including women and children, is proof that these criminals, traitors and mercenaries have only one goal - to destroy Algeria," he said.

The car contained more than 100 kg of explosives and was driven by a "volunteer of death," security forces said. It was the first reported suicide bombing in Algeria since the conflict began in January 1992.

No one immediately claimed responsibility. The security forces blamed the fundamentalist guerrillas seeking to topple the army-backed government and install an Islamic state.

The six-story police station was badly damaged, and newspapers said several police officers standing guard were killed. Security forces declined to release police casualty figures.

More than 15,000 people - including about 80 foreigners - have been killed in fighting between the militants and security forces since January 1992.

The car bomb incinerated numerous vehicles and shattered windows in buildings several blocks away. Downtown businesses were especially crowded in anticipation of the monthlong Ramadan holiday, which starts today.

Most of those injured were pedestrians, including many women and children. Numerous other victims were aboard a passing bus that was ignited by the blast.

The car that contained the bomb was reduced to a heap of twisted metal. State radio said it was a white Fiat stolen Monday.

ISRAEL AIRPORTS AUTHORITY
Jordan Border Land Crossing Points

ALLENBY CROSSING POINT

Effective today, Wednesday, February 1, and during the month of Ramadan, the Allenby Crossing Point will be open every day until 3 p.m. On Fridays, the crossing point will close at the usual time of 1 p.m.

Spokesman's Bureau

150 من الدول

Bahrain unrest a 'passing storm'

YOUSSEF AZMEH
MANAMA

A spate of anti-government agitation and arson has raised questions about the durability of Bahrain's ruling elite, but diplomats and residents in the Gulf island state are convinced the government has little to fear.

They said the unrest, confined almost exclusively to villages of the island's historically restive Shi'ite community, appears to have run out of steam.

"The government was never under threat... these were mainly pinpricks," one diplomat said.

Minor incidents were reported by residents over the weekend in one or two villages, where most of the rioting erupted over the past two months.

They said a heavy police presence might have deterred potential troublemakers - a measure of the government's success in suppressing the unrest.

Youths trying to mark the 40th day after the death of a man in clashes with the police early in December - the 40th day is an important religious occasion for Shi'ites - were prevented from doing so and a few were arrested.

"We were watching out for the weekend... very little happened, which is reassuring to the expatriates worried about a resumption of the trouble," one Western diplomat said.

The government blames incitement by militant clerics for the troubles in which five people, including a policeman, were killed.

A sixth man, seriously injured in previous riots, died in hospital this week, residents said.

The Sunni-dominated government this month deported four Iranian-trained clerics, all in their late twenties or early thirties, including Sheikh Ali Salman whose arrest on December 5 sparked the riots.

The emir, Sheikh Isa bin Sul-

man Khalifa, has blamed "foreign quarters" for the troubles, a reference to radical Iran whose media have been broadcasting wildly exaggerated claims about the extent of the unrest and the resulting deaths.

Ali Salman and the other deportees apparently all studied at religious seminaries in the Iranian holy city of Qom.

Government sources say some of those involved in the unrest trained with revolutionary guards in Iran or at camps in Lebanon.

Opposition sources say up to 2,000 people have been arrested since the unrest started, many held for only a few days.

Several hundred remain in prison.

But the arrests have not deterred a revival of political life in the island state that is unusually buzzing with political gossip. Political parties are banned.

"The barrier of fear has been broken," one opposition source said of the debates in Bahrain where political discussion was virtually taboo until recently because people feared the long arm of the security forces.

Opposition figures in Bahrain see the unrest as part of a wider movement for democracy in the state that lies a few kilometers off Saudi Arabia's richest oil producing region.

They say they have so far gathered 21,000 signatures on a petition calling for the restoration of the elected parliament that was dissolved 20 years ago.

This is a relatively large number in small country with a native population of less than 400,000.

The petition, the second to be organized in two years, has yet to be presented.

But the 1992 petition was rejected and diplomats expect the new one will suffer the same fate. (Reuters)

PLO-linked paper backs Beit Lid attack

THE London-based *al-Quds al-Arabi* newspaper has close ties with the PLO and expresses the views of the leadership.

On January 23, in an editorial signed by Abed Elbari Atuan, it praised the terrorist attack at Beit Lid and emphasized the following points:

• What can Palestinian police or others do against "young men at their peak who have decided to sacrifice their lives in the defense of the rights and the honor of their people?"

• The most important thing is that it took place outside of the sphere of influence of the Palestinian Authority, and the areas within which the Palestinian Police operate. Therefore it does not embarrass the police or the Authority.

This is the text of the article:

"There are increasing calls in Israel to freeze the talks with the Palestinians which are, after the fact, supposedly successful, and from which the Palestinians are supposedly satisfied and benefiting from their continuation. This is a protest against the suicide action carried out by the Islamic Jihad movement, the result of which was the death of 18 Israeli

soldiers and the wounding of 62 [sic].

"The freeze on the negotiations has become a demand of the Palestinians and Arabs, and a move like this by the Israelis will please many people in the territories and outside them, because the negotiations have become a heavy burden and a brutal and debasing activity for those involved in it.

"From the Israeli reactions - both government and opposition - it appears that the Israelis, who believe that they are smarter and more advanced, expect the Palestinians to send them roses and flowers each time that they build a settlement, expand another one, kill an Arab demonstrator, or confiscate land.

"We find it hard to understand why the Rabin government wants to take revenge against the weak and poor Palestinian Authority, to freeze the talks with it. It makes one think that the most important thing for the Palestinian Police to do - poorly trained and armed though it is - is to protect Israelis and settlers in Netanyahu and Tel Aviv.

"What can they or others do against young men at their peak, who have decided to sacrifice



ARAB NEWS DIGEST

their lives in the defense of the rights and the honor of their people, who endure abuse each day in negotiations, at the border crossings, and at most of the airports and Arab seaports?

"The action in Netanyahu demonstrated good preparation, a high spirit of sacrifice, and the ability of simple people in camps full of starvation and poverty to be victorious against the Israeli intelligence authorities. These are renowned in the world and are cited as an example for their efficiency and abilities.

"This action, therefore, is a reaction to the construction of settlements in Jerusalem and the West Bank.

"This reaction is a billion times stronger than the declarations of the Jerusalem Conference and the decisions of the Alexandria Conference.

Algerian Ramadan starts in blood

Jerusalem Post staff and agencies

THE Algerian Islamic Salvation Army's weekend call for increased slaughter during the holy month of Ramadan was swiftly underscored when dozens were killed and hundreds wounded in Monday's devastating car bomb attack on the capital's Amirouche Street.

"If the authorities are preoccupied today with the security situation, they should wait to see even more during this month, because the battle will be great," *Al-Hayat al-Arabiya* newspaper prophetically quoted the AIS as saying Sunday in a call to its terrorist partisans.

Sunday was also a day on which thousands of Algerians marched in the capital city to condemn the bloodshed and slaughter of the conflict pitting the army-backed authorities against Moslem fundamentalists.

As the chants of "No to terrorism" rang out along the Mediterranean seacoast, the newspaper published its dire and prophetic warning that an even greater level of killings was planned for February - Ramadan.

The AIS is the armed wing of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), which in January joined other opposition politicians in signing a peace plan hammered out in Rome.

The authorities blame the AIS for many killings, but its bloodshed is overshadowed by that attributed to the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) which last month hijacked an Air France plane.

The AIS order provided a somber backdrop to Sunday's march, attended by an estimated 10,000 people (150,000 according to



Thousands march in Algeria's capital city this week to protest terrorist acts by Moslem fundamentalists. (AP)

Devout Moslems prefer 'Islamic' insurance

YOUSSEF KASSEN
DUBAI

WESTERN-style life insurance, dismissed by some devout Moslems as immoral, is facing serious competition from Islamic insurers.

Recent surveys show that Islamic insurance, similar in its operation to mutual funds, is gaining ground in the Gulf.

Saudi Arabia has five Islamic insurance companies, the United Arab Emirates two and Bahrain and Qatar one each.

The Qatar Islamic Insurance Company, a general insurance company with a capital of 20 million riyals (\$7.6 million) started operating on January 1.

Another newcomer, the Dubai-based Islamic Insurance Company, says it offers an "Islamic alternative to life insurance," but has given no details.

Western-style life insurance is rejected by Moslem purists as gambling, pawning or usury. Some hard-line scholars even argue that life insurance is an attempt to defy fate - a sin for Moslems who believe that man's future is predetermined by God.

But insurers challenge the view. "There is no similarity between gambling and life insurance because the risk and certainty of death already exists and is therefore non-speculative," said a study by Ajmal Bhatti, business development manager of the Bahrain-based Arab Insurance Group (ARIG).

"Our existence as a life insurance industry is based on our belief in fate," said Elias Fakhoury, American Life Insurance Company's Gulf chief.

"We do not provide insurance

against death as nobody can do this... the concept of life insurance is that of the economic human value," he added.

Islamic insurance says it works on the principle of profit-sharing (*modaraba*), in which premiums are invested in instruments approved by Islamic shari'a law and returns on investment are not predetermined.

In a *modaraba* contract, participants invest a fixed sum for a fixed term to be distributed between an investment fund and a so-called solidarity (*takaful*) fund, say 10 percent of the total, which is the life-insurance side of the contract.

There is no direct return from a *takaful* contract but contributors get their money back from this cooperative-type fund in case of need, such as accident or death. Heirs are recognized in accordance with Islamic shari'a.

Western-style insurance firms feel that the market in Gulf states is unresponsive since life insurance is unresponsive since life insurance is offered as an "added bonus" to the more popular pension and medical-insurance schemes.

Based on latest published figures, annual per-capita spending on life insurance in the Gulf region ranges from a low of \$3 in Kuwait to a maximum of \$14 in Japan, \$1,635 in the US, and \$530 in the European Union.

"People may reject life insurance, but can they reject a check delivered to a widow or a widower every month... a freedom from twin fears of living too long or dying too soon?" Fakhoury asked. (Reuters)

US may broaden war on terror funding

THE Clinton administration may expand its drive against terrorism by seizing the interest on frozen bank assets of Libya and others accused of sponsoring terrorism, officials said this week.

The interest could amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars. Last week, President Clinton froze the bank deposits and other assets of 12 groups and 18 individuals to try to keep them from operating and raising money in the US.

Administration officials said it was too early to estimate how much money had been frozen. But they confirmed a report in *USA Today* that the administration may take the further step of seizing the interest on frozen bank assets of several countries accused of sponsoring terrorism. "The idea is in its infancy,"

said one official. "But it is being considered."

On Capitol Hill, the reception was positive but guarded.

"We're supportive of the concept, in general," said Marc Thiessen, spokesman for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. "It depends on some legal questions and what would happen to the money."

Thiessen said using the interest for rewards to apprehend terrorists would be acceptable.

Libya's assets were frozen in 1986. The US has been trying since 1988 to get Libya to hand over two terrorist suspects.

Clinton is due to send Congress legislation this week as part of his broadened campaign against terrorism. Ten Moslem fundamentalist and two militant Jewish groups were named in his order last week. (AP)

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The non-proliferation problem

ISRAELIS may be forgiven for being skeptical about Foreign Minister Shimon Peres's assurances that no concessions will be made on the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) issue. Skepticism is in order not only because of past disappointments with government promises of steadfastness, but because pressure is now being exerted on the government by the US as well as Egypt. Washington does not expect Israel actually to sign the treaty, but it wants it to make a gesture which will induce Egypt and other Arab states to sign the NPT when it comes up for renewal in April.

Egypt's strategy is clear. It wants Israel not only to return to the vulnerability of its "natural size" - as Egyptians refer to the 1949 armistice lines - but to make sure that this vulnerability is not ameliorated by the possession of nuclear capabilities.

The Egyptian vision of a new Middle East, unlike Peres's, is to have a dwarfed Israel teetering on the brink of dissolution. Only a weak, marginal Israel will remove Egyptian fears of Israeli domination of the entire region. That is why Cairo has ferociously fought against aliyah, tried to undermine Israeli progress in both the diplomatic and commercial spheres, and dedicated disproportionate efforts to achieving Israeli withdrawal from the territories. That is also why it wants Israel to forgo the nuclear option.

What makes the Egyptian motives seem even more ominous is that Cairo is developing the largest arsenal of chemical weapons in the Middle East, and collaborating with Libya, which is

also developing enormous biological and chemical capabilities.

Knowing that the current Israeli vision of peace will collapse if relations with Egypt sour, President Hosni Mubarak has threatened a deterioration in relations between the two countries unless Israel made concessions in the nuclear area. When this seemed insufficient, he got the US involved by threatening not only to refuse to sign the NPT renewal but to dissuade others from signing it.

The US's first reaction was anger with Egypt. But before long it demanded that Israel make at least "a gesture" to placate the Egyptians. As a result, Israel has announced that it will consider signing the NPT as soon as there is peace in the region and a regional mutual inspection system is instituted. Egypt has rejected the suggestion out of hand. Now Israel is expected to make "a more meaningful gesture."

Most puzzling in this saga is the American eagerness to have dictatorships sign the NPT. Nothing can be more dangerously counterproductive. By signing, these regimes acquire a respectability they do not deserve; companies eager to sell them materials for the development of non-conventional capabilities do so with relative impunity; and Western governments are lulled into a false sense of security about nuclear proliferation.

That the example of Iraq, a signatory to the NPT, has failed to disabuse the US of this passion for meaningless signatures is a sad reminder of Washington's incurable inability to grasp the nature of dictatorships.

Abandonment of allies

THE report on the South Lebanese Army (SLA) submitted to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by Uri Lubrani, the government's Lebanon coordinator, is far from encouraging. The SLA's morale, low for a long time now, is not getting better. Some of the soldiers have defected to Hizbullah, others have deserted. This, despite some extraordinary successes in SLA operations against Hizbullah, and the substantial increase of Israeli assistance in equipment, weapons, and funds.

The reasons for this morale problem are all too clear. First and foremost, Israel's declared willingness to evacuate the area once a peace treaty is signed with Syria makes the IDF a "lame duck." No one wants to curry favor with a departing boss. On the contrary. The natural inclination is to score points with the incoming authority by betraying the retiring force.

But the SLA also has some more concrete gripes. The Israeli agreement with the Syrians following "operation accountability" made SLA soldiers feel they were dispensable bargaining chips. While the agreement stipulated that the Hizbullah could not fire Katyusha rockets into Israeli territory, it placed no limitations on its actions against the security zone, manned mostly by SLA troops. It also prohibited Israeli fire on civilian targets north of the zone, thus handicapping the SLA's fight against Hizbullah, which uses villages as shelters and bases.

SLA soldiers are even more disturbed by doubts about Israeli intentions if and when a peace agreement is signed with Syria and Lebanon. They suspect that Israel would abandon them to the mercies of Damascus, the Beirut puppet government, and Hizbullah. Israeli promises that the peace treaty would include a Syrian-Lebanese pledge to incorporate SLA soldiers in the Lebanese Army are hardly reassuring. No one knows better than they how valueless Syrian commitments are.

Unfortunately, the SLA's suspicions of Israeli intentions are hardly baseless. If Israel's treatment of Palestinians who have helped it in its

fight against terrorism is any indication, its South Lebanese allies have good reason to worry. Not only has Israel done little to protect, resettle, and recompense these allies; it has made them feel that their blood is less valuable than Jewish blood. While terrorists convicted of murdering Jews have not been released under the Oslo-Cairo agreements, those guilty of murdering Arab "collaborators" have been allowed to join the Palestinian Police. This is one way of telling terrorists that they can continue to kill Israel's friends with utter impunity.

The policy is not only immoral; it is counterproductive and harmful. It has cost Israel the loyalty of some South Lebanese soldiers, and it may cause the loss of its most valuable Palestinian friends. According to Israel Radio, the Palestinian Authority's security services are wooing "collaborators," particularly those who have been exposed and rendered useless to the Israelis. Amin Hindi, the architect of the 1972 Munich massacre and now head of the Palestinian secret police, and Jibril Rajub, head of the Jericho security force, are busy trying to turn these "collaborators" into double agents. That these allies of Israel know much about the way the Israeli security services work render them invaluable assets to the PA. One such agent, who has rejected PLO blandishments, has warned that scores of his colleagues, mistreated and rejected by Israel, may not be able to resist the PLO's inducements.

Israel's conduct in this area is well-nigh reprehensible. On the one hand, it lionizes gentiles who saved Jews in the Holocaust; on the other, it treats with contempt and revulsion Palestinians who have prevented mass killings of Israelis. One can only attribute the existence of such a double standard to a loss of faith in Israel's cause. Those who doubt Israel's legitimacy and identify with the PLO consider Israel's Arab allies despicable traitors who should be discarded. That this attitude now seems to inform the government's actions is as puzzling as it is tragic.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir, - Every time there is a terrorist outrage, our prime minister gives his customary knee-jerk reaction: "This is an attack on the peace process and we cannot reward the terrorists by stopping the process." This call is then reinforced in the local and international media by government apologists, by pro-Palestinian commentators, and by such genuine lovers of the Jewish State as Yasser Arafat (and his adviser Ahmed Tibi), Mubarak, the State Department and the Europeans. We are urged instead of halting the process

WAR OF ATTRITION

to speed it up. After each attack, following a brief cosmetic pause (to allow public outrage to subside) this is just what our government, with one eye on the electoral clock, proceeds to do.

The so-called peace process is not a peace process, but a war of attrition being waged against the State of Israel. The process in which we are engaged is merely the continuation of the long conflict over Eretz Yisrael by other means. Every terrorist

attack is not intended to stop the process, but to accelerate it. It is part of a tactical campaign, an unholy alliance between talking and terror, aimed at bringing us to make further and more dangerous concessions, to depart further and further from the national consensus on security and identity.

Is this the peace of the brave? Rather, it is the peace of the blind and the deaf: blind to reality, deaf to reason.

GILBERT HERBERT

Haifa.

ALTERNATE SOLUTION

Sir, - Gerald Steinberg's article of January 25, "Long road to moderation," fails to point out that, while his alternative solution to the Oslo Peace Process does not require Palestinian agreement, it would surely be met with armed Palestinian resistance - arms they obtained from Israel. Sooner or later, such a confrontation (a euphemism for war), which we Israelis orchestrated, is inevitable.

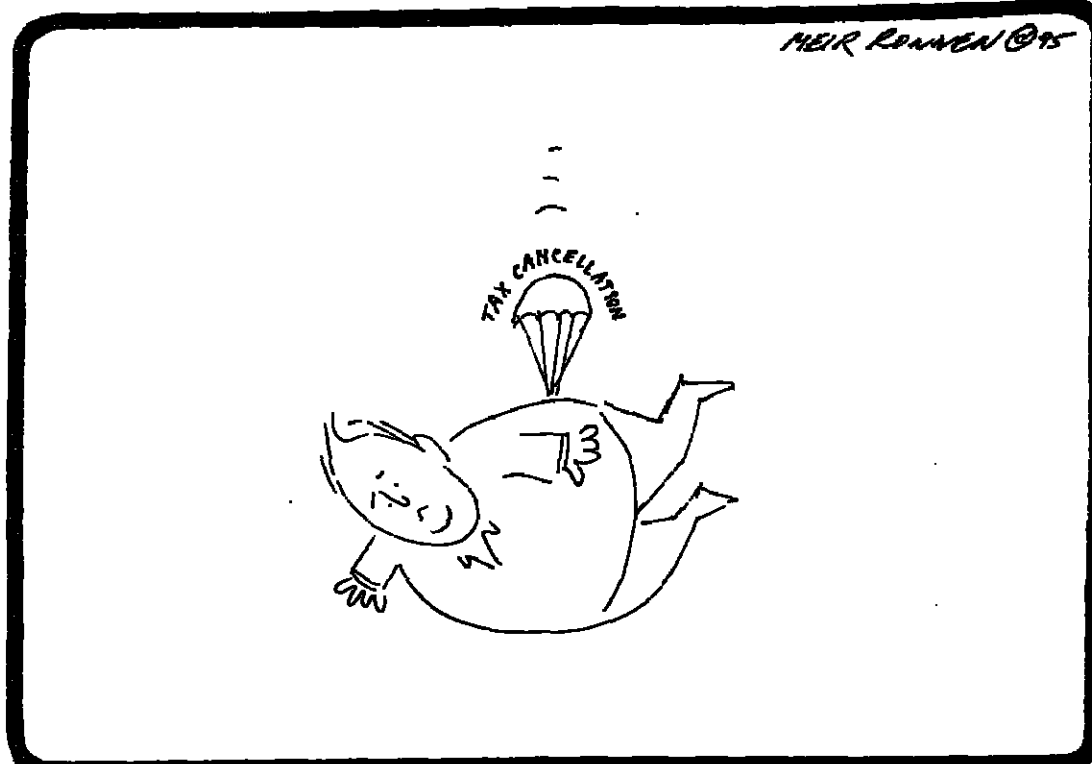
NETANYA BEN-YEHUDA
Jerusalem.

MARY E. SUFOTT
Keren Klia
Jerusalem.

RACIAL SLURS

Sir, - On January 15, you reported a mall robbery in Hadera, in which the masked robbers "reportedly spoke Russian." Identifying the racial or national origin of alleged criminals and wrong-doers in society is not limited to *The Jerusalem Post*. Slum property owners and other alleged exploiters of the poor and underprivileged, as well as errant businessmen have been identified in the media abroad as Jews, even as "Jewish immigrants."

The Israeli press might be expected to avoid such identification,



Next in line for terror

GABRIEL BEN-DOR

THERE is a profound misunderstanding of the Islamic terrorist phenomenon among those who assume that it was created on account of Israel, and that it is only Israel's problem.

The justification of those who back terror against Israelis is that, by suffering more and more casualties, Israel will become more pliant, to the benefit of the Arabs. Of course, the latter are somehow supposed to be immune to the same terrorism.

None of this stands up to careful scrutiny. The Arabs are playing with fire, and they are bound to be burned very soon. The Islamic phenomenon exists all over the region, regardless of any possible Israeli connection.

The Islamic fundamentalist revolution in Iran broke out in 1978-79 on purely domestic grounds, as was the case with the uprising in the northern Syrian city of Hama, put down by President Assad in 1982 at the cost of some 20,000 lives.

Islamic terror has for many months hit policemen, tourists, artists and intellectuals in Egypt, injuring just about anyone considered a challenge to the fanatical tenets of the fundamentalists. Among the injured victims is the Nobel prize-winning author Naguib Mahfouz.

In Algeria, a civil war is raging between fundamentalists and the military regime, claiming many thousands of casualties. None of this has anything to do with Israel.

ISLAMIC TERRORISM in Israel, as elsewhere, is the product of

poverty, backwardness and ignorance. Not only does it fail to address these root causes of deficiencies in Arab society, but it also feeds them and feeds on them. It prospers where there is an abundance of ignorant and misguided people.

The real objective of the fundamentalists is to discredit all secular regimes and their leaders, taking the Middle East back to the Middle Ages. They intend to impose on their fellow Arabs

Arab leaders who do not contain the fundamentalists will soon be their victims

regimes that are totalitarian, intolerant and violent in the extreme.

The struggle against them is also the struggle for the soul of the Arab nations, and indeed of the billion Moslems worldwide. Will they find an enlightened synthesis between Islam and modern democracy, or will they fall prey to the demagogic lure of the fundamentalist devastation?

Fundamentalism is nothing less than a revolt against modernity, democracy and the universal nature of the emerging new world order. It is the battle-cry of those who prefer war to peace, ignorance to enlightenment, persecution to freedom, hatred to under-

standing and cooperation.

Fundamentalism, a cultural and ideological force born out of the miseries of the Moslem world, now threatens to increase that misery for far longer.

Israel can and will defend itself against it - but only the Moslems themselves can really contain fundamentalism and come up with effective alternatives.

If they fail, it will be at their own peril. Fanatical fundamentalism cannot be appeased. It may be diverted against Israel for a while, but it is bound to hit violently at all those in power who are not 100 percent part of it. After Israel, will come the turn of Yasser Arafat and Assad, just as the turn of Algeria and Iran has already come.

Those who are unable or unwilling to understand this are bound to be the next victims. Celebrating the grief of Israel in gleeful demonstrations in the Palestinian and Arab street is a classic sign of political blindness. Their chickens will come home to roost soon enough, proving once again that those who do not learn from history are condemned to relive it.

When their own turn comes to be attacked, to be overwhelmed by the grief of burying their dead, perhaps they will remember the enormous error of their ways, of their glib assumption that being victimized by terrorists is something that happens only to others.

The writer is professor of political science at the University of Haifa, and director of the graduate studies program at the National Defense College.

It's kosher - but it stinks

JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH

THE Wise Men of Chelm were outraged when a fish meant for a borscht dinner was insolent enough to inadvertently slap the would-be diner in the face with his tail. They deliberated and decided to give the fish the ultimate in punishment: he was "drowned" in the sea.

Health Ministry director-general Prof. Mordechai Shani was found unfit by Attorney-General Michael Ben-Yair to remain in his job. The reason was that while serving as director of Sheba Hospital at Tel Hashomer some four years ago, Shani helped established a private medical business (with partners who included Prof. Boleslav Goldman, then deputy director of the hospital) - a violation of the Civil Service Commission rules preventing conflict of interest. As "punishment," Shani will today resume his post as director of Sheba, with Goldman - since 1993 the hospital's director - as his deputy.

Two years have passed since Shani sold his substantial shares in the company, so his violation of CSC rules is "obsolete." He can no longer be called before a disciplinary board.

Ephraim Sneh, who wasn't health minister when Shani's violation of the rules took place, switched his directors-general this week like a thief in the night.

His spokeswoman suddenly called reporters at 10 p.m. on Sunday to say that Shani was leaving the ministry on Tuesday and returning to his previous post as director of the country's largest hospital.

Was the odd timing an effort to keep the affair off the TV news and reduce the number of inches of damaging newspaper copy? Perhaps. Sneh, new to his job, was very dependent on Shani in finalizing and implementing the new national health insurance system. Very likely, he was shocked by the attorney-general's

ruling, and may have tried to get Ben-Yair to change his mind and leave the brilliant administrator in place.

Shani himself couldn't plead ignorance of the rules. An expert in medical administration, he certainly knew that civil servants may not get involved in private businesses without the express permission of a CSC committee. Then-health minister Ehud Olmert claimed recently that he had

When a senior health ministry official switched hats overnight, questions were raised

given Shani "authorization" for setting up the private company, but the CSC insisted no minister has the power to do so. Shani was certainly aware of this.

SHANI centralized more power in the hands of the ministry director-general than ever before. On his orders, a new global-budgeting policy in the government hospitals gave him the right to determine how much money each institution gets from the health funds, instead of the previous compensation on a per-patient, per-diem basis. Now, as Sheba director-general, Shani will be controlling the very budget he set as ministry director-general.

Senior administrators at hospitals around the country, chafing at Shani's monopolistic powers, regularly dropped hints to reporters that Shani was allegedly still running Sheba by remote control, through Goldman, during his two years in the ministry. This reporter sent these charges in writing to the ministry spokeswoman, but

never received an answer.

CSC rules require a cooling-off period for senior government officials who go into a private-sector job, if the new job is related to decisions they took in their government post. Top treasury officials, for example, must wait some time before taking a senior job in a commercial bank.

There is no rule specifically barring Shani's switch from ministry to hospital, says acting Civil Service Commissioner David Perlestein. But, logically, the principle is the same. While the Health Ministry's previous director-general, Dr. Moshe Mashiah, went directly from that job to become head of Wolfson Hospital in Holon, he had not enjoyed the same degree of power over the hospitals that Shani has had during the past two years.

Will the Shani affair induce the CSC to refresh civil servants' memories regarding "moonlighting" in private business and conflict of interest? Perlestein says that "from time to time, we do emphasize the rules, but in light of what has happened, perhaps we will again discuss this matter with all civil servants."

Perhaps the state comptroller should also examine the issue.

The writer is health and science reporter of The Jerusalem Post.

POSTSCRIPTS

RESIDENTS OF a British old-age home vowed to fight plans to build a funeral parlor on their doorstep, saying it is too close for comfort.

The 25 residents at the home in Hull will overlook the site. They said they did not want to spend their last years watching hearses come and go.

"It's disgraceful. We don't want to see coffins being carried out while we're relaxing," Madge Bowen, 87, said.

Slush pile

SUSANNAH HERBERT

THE uncontrollable urge to write a book is a terrible affliction that knows no mercy. No age, sex or class is immune, there's no cure and the plague is spreading. It even has a name: graphomania.

In 1993, 82,322 books were published in Britain. In 1986, the figure was only 52,508. And the mailbags of London's leading literary agents contain 30 manuscripts a day.

"Everyone thinks they have a novel in them. I feel like stopping people walking down the street and begging them to keep it to themselves," says Kate Parkin, publisher at Century and Arrow, who receives 60 unsolicited manuscripts a week.

Her readers, the hired help

Whatever you do, don't write a book

who plow through the slush-pile, are familiar with all the basic unpublishable plots: the opening in which a man wakes up with a hangover, the rollicking tale of below-decks shenanigans in the merchant navy, the homosexual saga set in the ancient world. Then there are the therapy books, the voyages of self-discovery embarked on at the suggestion of a helpful shrink. "It makes you want to scream. All that wasted effort for nothing," muses Parkin.

For author Milan Kundera, who coined the word in his 1979 novel *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, graphomania takes on the proportions of an epidemic "whenever a society develops to the point where it can provide three basic conditions."

First: "A high enough degree of general well-being to enable people to devote their energies to useless activities."

Second: "An advanced state of social atomization and the resultant general feeling of the isolation of the individual."

Third: "A radical absence of significant social change in the internal development of the nation."

IF KUNDERA'S analysis of the conditions which lead to epidemic scribbling is correct - and it seems to fit Britain all too snugly - authorship may soon cease to be a national aspiration and become the national profession.

It's a terrifying thought, because most contemporary books seem to meet no real need. Take fiction, which accounts for one in 10 books published nowadays. Many new novels are no good - ask any reviewer or try reading nothing but new novels. Since these are the best of the tens of thousands of manuscripts submitted, it is fair to say the great majority of novels written are pretty dreadful. They resemble, in the words of one literary agent, the kind of child only a mother could love.

So why do people write novels? It is seldom for the money, although there are exceptions, such as Jeffrey Archer. The average first novel, lucky enough to make it through the slush-pile, is doing very well to sell 3,000 copies.

Is it the fame? Scarcely. Even the most celebrated novelists come nowhere on the movie star or supermodel fame scale, and Salman Rushdie must be the only writer who avoids the streets for fear of being recognized.

Could it be that our culture has decided novelists are the highest form of human development? Are we that weird?

The answer, sadly, is probably yes.

When people claim to have a novel in them, they are really saying they have an untapped creative urge or that something in their lives strikes them as worthy of commemoration. It is generally a novel because novels seem to take no special skills. Writing a novel is the easiest kind of self-affirmation, a solitary indulgence of egotism.

The idea of playing God with your own creatures, of creating a world answerable only to you, satisfies a craving only politicians and autocrats can indulge in real life. It's a harmless game in which no one need suffer - except, perhaps, the literary agent who has to read the manuscript.

(Daily Telegraph)

Cyber-skies filled with the sound of classic fighter planes

'Sim freaks' are getting high on the mythology and romanticism of air combat, Martha Groves reports from Los Angeles

STANTON Perry grew up listening to his father's tales about ferrying planes across the Atlantic in World War II. He might have followed in Dad's contrails had it not been for myopia. So he indulges his fancy for flying in another way.

Each morning, he slips into the harness of his \$400 flight chair, reaches for his \$110 joystick, plants his feet on his \$150 rudder pedals, grasps his \$125 weapons-control system, cranks up his \$230 subwoofer-enhanced speakers, ogles his \$3,000 video display — and takes to the cyber-skies.

Perry, of Dana Point in Southern California, is a "sim head," one of the growing squadrons of Top Gun wanna-bes — all but a fraction of them male — who devote every spare moment and then some to playing flight-simulation games on their desktop computers.

Once the domain of an elite corps with high-end computer equipment and budgets to match, flight simulation has become the best-selling segment of entertainment software, thanks to powerful and relatively cheap multimedia tools that bring to life the drone of the P-51 Mustang and the shriek of the F-18 Hornet.

What on earth is behind this urge to wing it? It's the mythology and romanticism of flight and air combat.

"The last warrior who had control of his fate to a large degree was the fighter pilot," said Jonathan Baron (a.k.a. Blue Baron), a developer of combat simulation games. "He has that aura about him."

There is also that "spiritual feeling" that people — particularly men — have toward flight, he said.



Virtual pilot Stanton Perry plays with his flight simulator. There is a "spiritual feeling" about flight that keeps him hooked. (LA Times/Christine Corrier)

Sim junkies are competing online, subscribing to flight-sim magazines, joining clubs, attending conventions, sporting call signs like Reckless, Sniper and Mongrel and spending evenings being bounced around at home or in cockpits at such sim-based amusement centers as Fighter-town and Magic Edge, where instructors track the action from full-blown control towers.

With a few clicks of a flight stick or keyboard, players can reenact the London Blitz or pretend to be a Darth Vader lieutenant a la Star Wars. For the non-bellicose, Flight Simulator by Microsoft — the best-selling sim ever — offers views of the Empire

State Building or the Eiffel Tower as the civilian pilot soars over New York or Paris.

The sim craze is big business for game companies, many of which displayed their new CD-ROM simulation titles at the Consumer Electronics Show this month in Las Vegas. It's also creating sky's-the-limit opportunities for companies like Thunder-Seat and ThrustMaster that make gear — including vibrating chairs and \$3,000 cockpits — for desktop aviators.

Sim junkies grew up zooming around the backyard with arms outstretched and generally share a lifelong fascination with military aviation. They like the idea

of hunting a "bandit" and wasting him — virtually. Some have fathers, uncles and brothers who were fighter pilots. Many fly real Cessnas or gliders but crave the high jinks and fast action of "mano-a-mano" battle — without having to risk their limbs, of course.

"We like the word 'kill' in the military sense," said Tim (Ace) Timmerman of Fountain Valley, California. "But it's not that war is to be glorified."

Flight sim was launched in the early 1980s with games featuring primitive aircraft and stilted action. Then came Falcon. And by the late 1980s, improvements in resolution, color, graphics and

sound had helped launch a veritable fleet of games.

Electronic Arts came out with titles featuring the legendary Chuck Yeager as flight instructor. World War I and World War II air-combat sims followed, including, from Star Wars director George Lucas's empire, *Battlehawks 1942*, *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* and *Their Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain*.

In most games, landscapes and skies still tend to be fairly crude and geometrical, but a few offer astonishing detail, down to wispy clouds and richly textured islands where cruise ships are moored with ropes. Execute a banking maneuver, and the pilot sees dif-

ferent views of his plane's exterior, as well as ever-shifting terrain. In truly sophisticated games, sunset darkens into night, and buildings cast appropriate shadows depending on the time of day and the pilot's latitude and longitude.

A few times a year, Air Warrior, the on-line game, re-enacts battles in real time. Pilots fly across the English Channel, say, from France to London. Once shot down, the pilot is out of the action.

To prepare, novice warriors go through seven weeks of training. They do homework by electronic mail and sit through on-line lectures. Then everybody

takes to the skies to practice. Eric "Reckless" Pearson keeps tabs on the 2,500 subscribers who pay \$20 a year for his flight simulation magazine, *Intercept*. The mean age is 37; 34 percent served in the military.

Pearson works 60 hours a week at his real job, as a quality-assurance engineer for a plastics company. His wife, Elaine "Amazon" Zacharczenko, is a pharmacist. Together, they put out six *Intercept* issues a year from their Kingston, New York, home.

Pearson's widely read game reviews are based on at least 50 hours of late-night playing time in his home cockpit, fashioned from a Subaru sports car seat.

Whereas he focuses on actual games, Zacharczenko has made a name for herself as a sort of amateur psychologist. Her column, "Words of Wizzo-dom," has won a following among sim widows. In one, she offered warning signs for women who fear they might be dating a serious hobbyist: He owns a flight jacket, flight gloves, aviator sunglasses and a pair of silk boxers with jet fighters on them. She herself was alerted by her husband's license plate frame: "Too close for missiles. Switch to guns!"

Getting a handle on the size of the flight sim market is tricky.

Carl Knoch, marketing research manager for game company MicroProse, figures that, broadly defined, the market stretches to half a million households. Of those, perhaps 100,000 to 150,000 are hard-core sim heads, with many of them paying \$40 to \$60 for any game that hits the shelves.

Knoch estimates that flight sim games accounted for one-fifth of the \$540 million in PC entertainment software retail sales in 1994, making it the top category, ahead of adventure, strategy, action and sports games. Microsoft says Flight Simulator 5.0, the most recent upgrade, has sold more than 400,000 units at retail in the US since late 1993.

ThunderSeat Technologies of Marina del Rey, California, plans a chain of \$1.5 million sim-based entertainment centers, the first scheduled to open in July. They will vie with existing "experience software" centers, where individuals and groups, many sporting flight suits and goggles, pay \$1 a minute to be virtual pilots. (Los Angeles Times)

Odd swap: A gift of God for a gift of life

MATTHEW McALLESTER
NEW YORK

CAL Kleinman arrived at New York's John F. Kennedy Airport Monday clutching what he called a gift of God.

Next month, he will give a gift of life.

It is a straight swap for Kleinman, the president of Bennett X-Ray Technologies in Copiague, New York: an \$85,000 cutting-edge mammography machine for a priceless, 300-year-old Torah that for 50 years had been lying in the basement of a drug store in a small town less than a mile from the site of Auschwitz.

The town desperately needed the medical equipment, but had no way to pay for it. The only thing it had to offer were 18 Torah scrolls that had lain unnoticed since the defeat of Nazi Germany.

Through a complex network of deals and negotiations that brought it to New York via Rome, Chicago and Cincinnati, the first Torah scroll arrived in New York on Monday. Its permanent home will be Temple Beth Torah in Melville, New York.

"This is a moment of spiritual healing that is also a moment of physical healing," said Rabbi Marc Gelman, of Temple Beth Torah.

"The spiritual is the return of the Jewish scrolls to the Jewish community. The physical is the giving of the mammography equipment to the town in Poland."

Kleinman was already under contract with the Polish government to export 14 Contour mammography machines, which detect breast cancer tumors. The town that held the Torah was not slated to receive mammography equipment, in spite of high rates of breast cancer which might be due to high levels of pollution in the former Communist country.

GELMAN learned of the existence of the Torah through a friend seven months ago — about the same time he learned from his good friend Kleinman that the same Polish town would not be getting a mammography machine.

Through negotiations with town and religious leaders, and with the help of a few chance

connections, the link between Kleinman and the town was made. Kleinman jumped at the chance to help the developing country and to gain the Torah for his temple.

When the town receives the Contour machine, it will send the remaining 17 Torah scrolls to the temple.

That process should be relatively simple, Gelman said, but getting the first one required some diplomatic wheeling and dealing.

Because of the difficulty of establishing ownership, and Polish bureaucracy, Gelman said it would have been impossible to transport the scrolls out of Poland.

That's where the Catholic Church came to the rescue. "There are two priests in Warsaw who were able to declare this Torah a sacred icon of the Catholic Church," Gelman said. "As such, they were able to take them from the country in diplomatic pouches."

It didn't hurt that Pope John Paul II is Polish — when the scroll arrived at JFK Airport Monday, it was wrapped in a white satin shroud that the pope had blessed and given to Chicago's Cardinal Joseph Bernardin who, in turn, gave the shroud to Kleinman in a gesture of unity.

The scroll was first flown to Chicago to be blessed by Bernardin, then to the University of Cincinnati, where its authenticity was verified.

In the excitement, Kleinman could not even remember the name of the town outside Auschwitz that he had visited seven months ago.

When he was there, he saw the 18 Torahs that had been unearthed by a Jewish organization called the Raphaenu Society, whose mission is to locate Torahs and Jewish relics that the Nazis preserved during the war.

"The 18 Torahs were each sealed in an oak chest with tar sealing up the seams and with wax paper on the lid and sides to make it as airtight as possible," said Kleinman.

"What we have is a gift of healing," said Gelman. "It is in response, not in return, for a gift of healing being released."

Russia's astrologers dish out doom and gloom

FRED HIATT
MOSCOW

IN Russia, astrologers do not sugarcoat the news.

"Today is a largely dangerous day," one recent — and typical — horoscope warned from the pages of the *Kommersant* newspaper. "You may end up broke.... This day is entirely unsuitable for undertakings of any sort...."

"You shouldn't expect anything good from your family life today.... It's better not to gamble. On a day like this, whole fortunes are lost."

On a day like this, you might think, it would be better to crawl back into bed.

But then again, the next day may not be any better: "Fraud, cheating and crooked deals are only a small fraction of the troubles that threaten to disrupt all your plans today," another cheerful *Kommersant* chart began that same week.

Banned in Soviet days as beneath the dignity of scientific Marxism, astrology has caught on big-time in the new Russia.

Russians may hear their future on the radio, see it on television, call for a personalized account by telephone or read it in almost any newspaper or magazine.

Even in the official government newspaper *Rossiskie Vesti*, there is a horoscope devoted entirely to health: "Your health reserves are low," it warned one recent day. "You may have problems with your spine.... It would be best to refrain from sexual relations.... Diseases beginning today may last a long time."

Of course, the stars over Russia do not always foretell gloom. But even when the signs are auspicious, Russian astrologers can find a downside.

A growing energy field during this week will be a stimulus for action," *Moskovsky Komsomol*'s astrologer predicted recently. "But if you don't surrender to its influence, the result may be a serious disease or nervous breakdown."

IT IS no secret that Russians enjoy an occasional wallow in the slough of despond. No one curls up with a bowl of popcorn and *The Brothers Karamazov* to cheer up. Nor is there any question that many Russians' lives are exceedingly troubled.

If you fight for the communal toilet every morning, get splattered by street slush every day

and scrip on sugar for your tea each evening, you may justifiably feel skeptical of a perennially rosy horoscope.

But could it be that Russians are unhappy, at least in part, because they read their horoscopes too faithfully?

"It can be pretty pessimistic," acknowledged Yelena Myasnikova, chief editor of the Russian edition of *Cosmopolitan*.

In the current issue of that magazine, for example, noted astrologer Tamara Globa listed for her readers the "fortunate" days in November and December — a total of 12 — and the "negative" days — 28 in all.

"We're not very happy about that, because we want *Cosmopolitan* to be a very optimistic magazine," said Myasnikova. "But when you're dealing with a famous person, a real authority in the field, of course it's very difficult to say, 'Don't write what you really think. Write that everything will turn out okay.'"

In Globa's case, there appears to be no danger of that.

"November is the hardest month," she warned Aquarians. "It will bring the loss of friends and protectors, hostility and deceit, and problems with your parents. Be careful about your health." Russia's horoscopes at times provide a sad mirror of the disruptions of modern life. "Don't get frantic when you find out that all your savings are gone," the journal *Nedelya* warned Geminis not long ago.

"You have a lot of big plans as far as money is concerned, but none of them will come true," said the workers' newspaper *Trud*.

Probably no stargazer has better adapted to modern Russia than Valery Ledovskikh, pen name of the astrologer who writes weekly in Russia's leading business newspaper, *Kommersant*. Ledovskikh perfectly reflects in his predictions the dangers, frustrations and slights endured by the struggling new

businessmen of Russia: "Your deliveries will not arrive on time, or will never arrive." "You should intensify the guard on your apartment: representatives of criminal structures are not doing." "On Tuesday, the shady deals that you made earlier may become known to the broad public."

Even after-work functions may offer no solace. "Unpleasant people will set the tone at these receptions," *Kommersant* warned one day recently, "and no one will pay attention to you."

Perhaps it is in its fatalism that *Kommersant*'s, and Russia's, astrology most clearly differs from America's. To American astrologers, a dangerous alignment of the planets offers an obstacle to overcome — another opportunity for personal growth.

Kommersant's horoscope, by contrast, would have its readers simply wait for another day. (The Washington Post)

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Nation's credit rating remains unchanged

Government expected improvement

ISRAEL received official credit ratings of BBB+ from Standard & Poor's and Baal from Moody's, the Treasury reported yesterday.

Although the government expected its formal rating to exceed its informal rating of BBB+ based on the improvement in the economy and the recent positive regional developments, the rating companies' concern over the country's high public debt led them not to improve the rating.

"The rating balances the substantial strengthening in Israel's geopolitical position, deepening micro-economic reforms and improved growth prospects with a high public debt burden estimated at 121 percent of Gross Do-

JOSE ROSENFELD

mestic Product in 1995," Standard & Poor's said in a statement. "This debt burden will likely constrain fiscal and balance of payments flexibility over the medium term."

The Treasury requested the official ratings to enable the government and Israeli firms to issue tradable bonds abroad, and thereby increase and vary the sources of foreign currency at the economy's disposal.

Asked if Treasury officials were disappointed that the country's rating was not higher, as they had hoped, Treasury spokesman Eli Yoseph said "we are very satisfied with the results,

which show a positive outlook for the economy."

Banking sources said the rating would have been raised a notch but for the recent Mexican debacle, in which the government last month devalued the new peso and then let it float on world markets.

Following that, the rating agencies came in for criticism for being insufficiently cautious over the risks in emerging market countries, of which Israel is considered to be one.

The Treasury said investment banks from the US, Europe and Japan are showing great interest in underwriting foreign issues.

The Moody's and Standard & Poor's ratings are equivalent.

US aid revives Mexico markets

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - The Mexican stock market soared more than eight percent yesterday as investors cheered a revamped economic aid package announced by US President Clinton for the nation's battered economy.

The battered peso also reversed its slide against the dollar, gaining 55 centavos to 5.85 per dollar before midday after falling as low as 6.5 Monday.

Clinton, saying Mexico needed help now before its crisis got quickly worse, scrapped plans to

try and force up to \$40 billion in loan guarantees for Mexico through Congress. Instead, he announced a reduced US credit line of \$20b. that will not require Congressional approval.

He said the US contribution would be in addition to an enhanced credit line of \$17.5b. from the International Monetary Fund and a "short-term lending facility" of \$10b. from the Bank of International Settlements.

The Mexican Finance Ministry said its credit lines from abroad now added up to \$50.76b., and

the US component could be paid back over three to 10 years instead of three to 10 months previously.

A sense of relief rippled through Mexican markets, sending interest rates lower as the stock market index soared.

The Mexican central bank, which had been facing a potentially difficult auction this week of its dollar-denominated Tesobono securities, decided simply to declare the auction void after Clinton announced the new deal.

Investors had asked for interest

rates of up to 40 percent to cover their risk in buying Tesobonos, the securities that are at the heart of Mexico's six-week-old economic crisis because of fears that the government might not be able to repay them.

Mexico's crisis broke December 20 when the fledgling government of President Ernesto Zedillo devalued the new peso and then let it float on world markets.

It took the action because of declining confidence that Mexico could sustain a rocketing trade deficit with the rest of the world.

MKs: We won't raise rates for compulsory vehicle insurance

EVELYN GORDON

THE Knesset Finance Committee's insurance subcommittee will under no circumstances permit a raise in compulsory car insurance rates, subcommittee chairman Gideon Saguy (Labor) said yesterday.

"Insurance premiums in this country are already on the border of what is reasonable," he said. "No way will we approve an increase in the premiums. We would like to see them go down."

Saguy also asked the Treasury's supervisor of insurance, the association of insurance companies and Avner - the conglomerate which provides compulsory insurance - to get back to the committee within 15 days on a proposal to cancel compulsory insurance payments and instead collect the money by raising the gas tax.

This way, he said, all drivers would be insured automatically, since all drivers buy gas.

The subcommittee devoted

most of yesterday's session to discussing the dispute between Avner and the Eliahu insurance company, which wants to abandon Avner, despite being bound to it by contract.

Currently, all insurance companies in Israel participate in Avner. The Tel Aviv District Court is scheduled to hear the case on February 19.

Eliahu argued it does not want to tie its fortunes to that of a dead horse, and showed the committee expert opinions to prove that Avner is indeed dying.

Avner counterattacked by producing its own expert opinions, which showed its accumulated deficit is steadily shrinking.

Saguy said it was "surprising" to see four opinions, all written by well-known experts in the field, each of which faithfully reflected the views of the party which commissioned it and diametrically opposed the other party's findings.

Barnea tells court: 'Avner's problems could lead to its collapse'

Company expected to announce NIS 45m. in profits today

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

AVNER'S structural problems could lead to its collapse, finance professor Amir Barnea told the Tel Aviv District Court earlier this week.

"There is a real business risk in long-term agreements with Avner, both for the insurance company and the insured," Barnea said. "I expect new insurance companies will try to operate without Avner by offering competitive tariffs that will further worsen Avner's problems and lead to its collapse."

Barnea's opinion was submitted

to the court on behalf of Eliahu Insurance, which filed a claim against Avner last year.

It asked the court to recognize the cancellation of Eliahu's long-term contract with Avner because Avner is insolvent.

Last year Eliahu withdrew its contract with Avner and signed an agreement with re-insurance agents from abroad who have agreed to cover Eliahu's car insurance holders.

Eliahu had a special agree-

ment with Avner to equally divide premium and payments from legal claims. Avner is suing Eliahu for breach of contract.

Avner's board of directors is scheduled today to approve the company's financial statements for the third quarter of 1994. Contrary to Barnea's conclusions, media reports said the company earned NIS 45 million in the third quarter last year.

Avner, the government insurance body which pays claims to accident victims, refused to comment on the reports.

GDP up 20% in Judea, Samaria

JOSE ROSENFELD

THE Gross Domestic Product (GDP) soared 20 percent last year in Judea and Samaria according to early estimates, the Central Bureau of Statistics reported yesterday.

The sharp increase reflected the large olive crop last year. The GDP rose 12% in 1992 and 1993 in Judea and Samaria and 15% in Gaza.

In both areas, the population grew at a phenomenal 4%-5% annually.

The territories combined GDP was 4%-5% of Israel's, three-quarters coming from Judea and Samaria and the rest from Gaza.

The per capita income in 1992-93 was \$2,500 in Judea and Samaria and \$1,400 in Gaza.

In 1992, both the economy and income rose significantly in the territories due to the good weather conditions for agriculture and the large demand for construction workers in Israel.

By contrast, due to the closure in 1993, income from work in Israel fell 30% and the olive crop was small.

Koor Industries hopes for 6% increase in '95 sales

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

KOOR Industries president and CEO Benjamin Gaon yesterday approved the company's 1995 business plan, which calls for a six percent increase in total sales for all the companies belonging to the group.

This increase will depend on an expected 11% rise in subsidiaries' export sales, Gaon told board members at a meeting.

He said Koor will be the country's largest industrial exporter this year, as the conglomerate's exports are expected to represent about 9% of the economy's total industrial exports.

Speaking at Koor's executive management meeting Monday, Gaon said the company will

invest some \$100 million in various activities.

Gaon said Koor's objective is not only to become the nation's most profitable corporation, but also to play an active role in the region's burgeoning economic relations.

He emphasized that the agreement reached last week to establish a \$60m. Tunisian-American-Israeli-Palestinian fund to invest in the region's economy and infrastructure is part of Koor's peace task activities.

The agreement was signed during Gaon's visit to Tunis as head of a delegation of Israeli industrialists.

Koor Industries said it will em-



Gaon: Increase will depend on an expected 11% rise in subsidiaries' export sales.

ploy about 19,000 workers by the end of the year and have sales of NIS 510,000 per worker.

Local hotel service 'catching up' with abroad

HAIM SHAPIRO

THE service in hotels here can be favorably compared to that in competing countries, Israel Hotel Association president Michael Federman said yesterday.

However, it is due as much to the deterioration of service abroad as the improvement here.

Speaking at a press conference to mark the opening tomorrow of the Association's biennial conference, Federman cited Tourism Ministry surveys of departing tourists, which showed that the overwhelming majority were satisfied with service in hotels here.

He added that as a frequent traveler, he can testify to the fact that service standards in other countries have gone down.

Avi Rosental, director of the Association, noted that last year there were a total of 16.7 million bed nights in local hotels, six percent more than 1993.

However, the national average occupancy rate dropped from 67 percent in 1993 to 65% last year, as a result of a 1% increase in the number of rooms, which last year totaled 40,000.

Revenues for the sector totaled \$900 million, of which \$500m. came from foreign tourism. However, profitability slipped as a result of the lower occupancy rates and unfavorable currency movements.

Rosental also noted that representatives of both the Jordanian and the Tunisian hotel associations are to take part in the Israeli association's conference for the first time.

Digital allowed to withdraw suit against IBM, but must pay NIS 20,000 in costs

EVELYN GORDON

THE Supreme Court yesterday permitted Digital Equipment Corp. to withdraw its suit against IBM, but, in a rare move, slapped it with NIS 20,000 in court costs.

Digital spokeswoman Ziva Orian denied that the court costs had anything to do with Digital's submission of a doctored document to the court, pointing to the fact that the sum was "very modest."

Justices Dov Levine, Eliezer Goldberg and Eliahu Mazza said merely that they imposed the costs "after examining the arguments of both sides on this issue."

However, the arguments of both the state and IBM did relate

to the doctored document.

The case stemmed from a lucrative air force contract to develop a computer system for its classified "Metronome" project.

Digital was originally awarded the contract, but IBM successfully appealed the decision in the Jerusalem District Court last year on the grounds that Digital had not met one of the conditions for competing in the tender.

Digital then appealed to the Supreme Court, and as one of its arguments, claimed that IBM was also not eligible to win the contract, because it lacked the necessary validation of its product.

However, both the state and IBM charged that two lines had been eliminated from the document Digital submitted in support of this claim.

Orian admitted that the document had been altered, but said the changes were made by an employee of the company at his own initiative, without the knowledge of senior managers. The employee was fired, she said, and Digital informed the court as soon as it found out what had happened.

After IBM submitted the necessary validation, Digital asked to withdraw its suit. The court agreed, but ordered Digital to pay NIS 15,000 to IBM and NIS 5,000 to the state.

ISRAEL LANDS ADMINISTRATION

ISRAEL LANDS ADMINISTRATION
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 Extension of Last Date for Submitting Offers

The Israel Lands Administration and Ministry of Construction and Housing announce that the last date for submitting offers for the above invitation to tender has been postponed to Wednesday, February 15, 1995 at 12 noon. Bids should be placed in the tenders box in the Haifa branch of the Israel Lands Administration, 13 Derech Ha'atzmaut, Haifa (Tel. 04-355411), during regular working hours, by the above date.

WORLD BRIEFS

GM reports record '94 profits: General Motors Corp., driven by its best performance in North America in five years, yesterday reported record 1994 profits of \$4.9 billion. GM said the earnings, which equaled \$5.15 a share, were nearly double 1993's profit of \$2.5 billion, or \$1.28 a share. *Reuters*

Luxembourg court approves BCCI compensation plan: A Luxembourg court approved a \$1.8 billion compensation deal yesterday for creditors of the failed BCCI, paving the way for the first major payout to creditors since the bank collapsed in 1991. The court was the last of three to clear the settlement between the liquidators of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, majority shareholder Abu Dhabi and creditors. *Reuters*

ISRAELI MONEY MARKETS

Patah (foreign currency deposit rates) (\$1.195)				
Currency (deposit for)	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS	
U.S. dollar (\$500,000)	5.500	5.875	6.500	
French franc (FF 200,000)	5.125	5.500	6.250	
German mark (DM 200,000)	4.000	4.250	4.750	
Swiss franc (SF 200,000)	2.875	3.125	3.500	
Yen (10 million yen)	0.025	0.025	0.075	

(Rates vary higher or lower than indicated according to deposit)

Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (\$1.195)				
CURRENCIES AND TRAVELERS		BANKNOTES		Rep. Rates
Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell	
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U.S. dollar	3.0141	3.0141	—	2.9880
German mark	1.9893	1.9891	—	1.9901
French franc	4.7336	4.8008	—	4.7303
Japanese yen (100)	3.0113	3.0338	—	3.0335
Dutch guilder	1.7886	1.7814	—	1.7810
Swiss franc	2.3338	2.3722	—	2.3720
Swedish krona	0.3997	0.4023	—	0.4023
Norwegian krona	0.4482	0.4558	—	0.4558
Denish krone	0.4998	0.5058	—	0.5058
Finland mark	0.6397	0.6448	—	0.6448
Canadian dollar	2.0928	2.0928	—	2.0928
Australian dollar	2.2544	2.2544	—	2.2544
S. African rand	0.0420	0.0420	—	0.0420
Belgian franc (10)	2.8003	2.8397	—	2.8397
Austrian schilling (10)	1.9822	1.9998	—	1.9998
Italian lire (1,000)	—	—	—	—
Japanese yen (100)	—	—	—	—
Egyptian pound	—	—	—	—
West East	3.7197	3.7721	—	3.7721
Spanish peseta (100)	4.8752	4.7391	—	4.7391
—	2.2545	2.2595	—	2.2595

* These rates vary according to bank. — Bank of Israel. SOURCE: BANK LEUM

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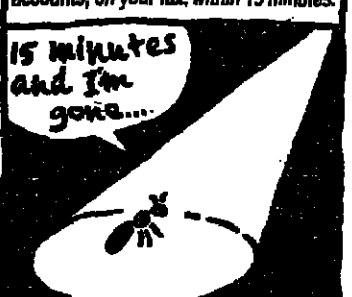
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Index	Last	Change
DJ Industrial	2943.22	+11.44
DJ 30	2943.22	+11.44
DJ 30	2943.22	+11.44
DJ 30	2943.22	+11.44
DJ 30	2943.22	+11.44

Other stock market indexes

Index	Last	Change
FTSE 100	2891.4	+1.5
Nikkei 225	10,000.0	+100.0
Hong Kong Hang Seng	7,500.0	+50.0
Shanghai Composite	1,000.0	+10.0

Israeli stocks in NY

Symbol	Last	Change
BEZK	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10

US dollar crossrates (US)

Country	Rate	Change
Japan	107.50	+0.10
Germany	1.65	+0.01
France	6.55	+0.01
Italy	1,360	+10

Libor rates

Term	Rate	Change
3 months	5.50%	0.00%
6 months	5.75%	0.00%
9 months	6.00%	0.00%
12 months	6.25%	0.00%

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US commodities

Commodity	Last	Change
Crude Oil	22.50	+0.10
Gold	375.00	+0.10
Silver	10.00	+0.10

London commodities

Commodity	Last	Change
Crude Oil	22.50	+0.10
Gold	375.00	+0.10
Silver	10.00	+0.10

Spot market metals (US)

Metal	Rate	Change
Copper	1.50	+0.01
Aluminum	0.50	+0.01
Zinc	0.80	+0.01

New York metal futures

Metal	Rate	Change
Copper	1.50	+0.01
Aluminum	0.50	+0.01
Zinc	0.80	+0.01

London metal futures

Metal	Rate	Change
Copper	1.50	+0.01
Aluminum	0.50	+0.01
Zinc	0.80	+0.01

TEL AVIV STOCKS

Multi-sided trading

Symbol	Price	Change
BEZK	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10

Two-sided trading

Symbol	Price	Change
BEZK	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10

PARALLEL LIST

Symbol	Price	Change
BEZK	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10

PROPERTY, BUILDING & AGRICULTURE

Symbol	Price	Change
BEZK	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Symbol	Price	Change
BEZK	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10

TRADE & SERVICES

Symbol	Price	Change
BEZK	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10

INDUSTRIALS

Symbol	Price	Change
BEZK	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10

INTERNATIONAL STOCK PRICES

Symbol	Price	Change
BEZK	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10

NEW YORK

Symbol	Price	Change
BEZK	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10

PARIS

Symbol	Price	Change
BEZK	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10

FRANKFURT

Symbol	Price	Change
BEZK	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10
ALMO	10.00	+0.10

STOCK MARKET ROUNDUP

Market	Index	Change
London	2,800.00	+10.00
Paris	3,500.00	+20.00
Frankfurt	4,000.00	+30.00

WALL STREET REPORT

Market	Index	Change
NYSE	2,900.00	+10.00
NASDAQ	3,000.00	+20.00
AMEX	4,000.00	+30.00

CURRENCY CROSS-RATES

From	To	Rate
USD	GBP	0.65
USD	EUR	0.75
USD	JPY	100.00

Shares jump more than expected

TEL AVIV STOCK MARKET

Index	Value	Change
Two-Sided index	174.67	+7.72%
Maof index	173.62	+7.37%
Karam index	153.18	+4.43%

THE market reacted more strongly than expected yesterday to the recommendation to cancel the capital gains tax.

The Two-Sided rose 7.7%, the Maof 7.4% and the Karam 4.4%.

Turnover was significantly higher, at NIS 251.1 million. More than 250 securities were marked "buyers only."

The market shifted into high gear early in the morning and stayed there until mid-afternoon, when some signs of profit-taking moderated the price rises.

The Karam posted a net surplus of buy orders of more than NIS 273m., while the Maof showed NIS 345m. of buy orders without any sell orders.

Bank branches were reporting that some of their clients who had been active investors until recently showed up again at the bank and placed buy orders.

Prices rose by close to 10% from the opening of the afternoon trading. These rises affected practically all the securities on that market with very few exceptions - such as Israel Chemicals, AIPM and Bezek, which traded with rises of about 2.5%.

The two major indexes, the Two-Sided and the Maof, kept climbing until they reached close to 8.5%, at which point prices started eroding until they declined by close to 1% from their peak.

Elbit and Elron rose 10%, Osem was up 9.25%, Koor increased 8.75%, and IDB Bank holding 8.25%. The highest rise was in Hanal shares, which jumped 41%.

Among the more moderate rises were Petrochemicals, Teva up 6.25%, and Tadiran up 6.75%.

Teva and Tadiran are considered arbitrage securities and their price is linked to what occurs in New York. Petrochemicals has not been much affected by the bear market, and concluded 1994 with a positive real yield, which was no real feat, hence the moderate rises.

The Maof Options market Wall Street slipped on fears of an interest rate increase.

The All Ordinaries Index ended 261 points, or 1.41% down, at 18,306.

JOHANNESBURG - South African shares finished mixed as industrial remained under pressure. However, gold attempted a bounce from lows following recent steep losses, buyers remained scarce amid concern about emerging markets and foreign selling, while a softer financial rand offered limited support to offshore traded stocks.

The Overall Index was 38.2 points off at 5,054.2. The industrial index 50.2 lower at 6,221.7 and the gold index 12.2 better at 1,507.4.

FTSE Index closes 4.3 points lower

WORLD MARKET ROUNDUP

LONDON (Reuters) - Shares of British blue chips ended mixed with a weaker tone in relatively light volume as investors remained sidelined, waiting to see whether US and British monetary authorities will raise interest rates as expected.

The FTSE 100 closed off 4.3 points at 2,991.6.

TOKYO - Tokyo Stocks closed lower as profit-taking and hedge selling offset active fresh buying of construction and related stocks. The key 225-share Nikkei average closed down 103.06 points, or 0.55 percent, at 18,649.82.

SYDNEY - The Australian share market closed at a two-month low on light volume after Wall Street slipped on fears of an interest rate increase.

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Blue-chip stocks close higher

WALL STREET REPORT

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Blue-chip stocks closed higher yesterday as US President Clinton's surprise move to bypass Congressional opposition to his aid package for Mexico relieved concern over a potential disruption of international financial markets.

The Dow Jones industrial average closed with a gain of 11.78 points at 3,843.86, based on early and unofficial data.

In the broader market, advancing issues led declines 4-3 on very active trading of more than 411 million shares on the New York Stock Exchange.

CURRENCY CROSS-RATES

MARK	STERLING	YEN	SFR	FFr
MARK	2.4078/89	157.41/53	2.0257/21	8.3429/14
STERLING	1.5289/02	0.6347/51	1.2880/08	5.2984/14
YEN	118.52/65	0.4821/27	77.51/56	4.1072/28
SFR	0.2884/87	0.1197/99	18.84/88	0.2431/26
FFr				

Man Utd to Cantona: This is your last chance

LONDON (Reuters) - Eric Cantona has been told he will be sacked by Manchester United if he is involved in any more serious trouble.

The warning came from United chairman Martin Edwards, who said: "If Eric was to repeat the sort of behavior we saw at Selhurst Park, we would have to dispense with his services."

"If he perpetrated an offense of similar gravity the FA would take steps to remove him from the game."

Cantona has flown to France to avoid the media spotlight following his attack on a Crystal Palace fan after he had been sent off in last Wednesday's Premier League match.

"I just hope Eric realizes he can't carry on like the other night and he appreciates the opportunity the club have given him to continue," added Edwards.

The French striker has been suspended for the rest of the season and fined two weeks' wages by United. He faces an FA charge of misconduct bringing the game into disrepute.

But three opposition British Members of Parliament, all representing constituencies near Manchester United's Old Trafford headquarters, have called on the club to think again.

In a motion presented in the House of Commons yesterday, they say that Cantona "should be allowed an early resumption of his playing career, certainly before the end of the current season".

The MPs, all members of the Labor Party, said the club had been influenced by a "hysterical" media campaign and Cantona had been the subject of appalling abuse.

Penalty save keeps Wolves alive

LONDON (Reuters) - A superb penalty save by Paul Jones kept alive Wolverhampton's dreams of reviving former glory days as they fought out a goalless draw with Sheffield Wednesday in an FA Cup fourth round tie on Monday.

The Wolves goalkeeper threw himself high to his right to turn aside the spot-kick by Chris Bart-Williams after a questionable decision by referee Alan Wilkie looked to have given the Premier

League side the chance of a late winner.

Wilkie, the referee who sent off Manchester United's Eric Cantona last Wednesday prior to the Frenchman's televised attack on a fan, ruled Bart-Williams had been brought down by Wolves defender Neil Embley three minutes from the end.

It looked a surprising decision, with Embley clearing the ball for a corner long before Bart-Williams

stumbled and fell.

But justice was seen to be done when Jones turned the spot-kick around the post.

A draw was no less than Wolves deserved with the First Division club mounting a number of telling attacks on the Wednesday goal.

The eventual winners have been drawn at home in the fifth round against Leicester, currently bottom of the Premier League.

Struggling Rangers beat Senators

NEW YORK (AP) - Adam Graves recorded his fifth career hat trick and added an assist, and Petr Nedved scored his first two goals as a Ranger as New York broke out of a scoring slump and beat the winless Ottawa Senators 6-2 Monday night.

Steve Larmer also scored and Mike Richter made 20 saves for the Rangers, who had dropped four of their first five games this season after winning the Stanley Cup last June.

The Senators (0-3-2) were the perfect antidote for New York's woes. Ottawa has dropped all eight games against New York since re-entering the league two seasons ago.

Sean Hill and Pat Elynuik scored for Ottawa.

Panthers 2, Bruins 1
John Vanbiesbrouck stopped 38 shots and Dave Lowry snuffed a tie as visiting Florida won its third in a row after opening the season with three consecutive losses. The Bruins have lost two in a row after winning their first three.

Vanbiesbrouck saw more action - 16 saves - in the first period than Boston goalie Vinny Riendeau did all game as the Panthers mustered just 14 shots. In all, Boston outshot Florida 39-14.

Boston's Cam Neely and Florida's Jesse Belanger matched goals.

Leafs 2, Stars 1

Toronto's Felix Potvin, fifth in the NHL in wins last year, stopped 43 shots as the visiting Maple Leafs



CHECKED - Rangers defenseman Kevin Lowe crashes into Ottawa left-winger Sylvain Turgeon as Rangers right-winger Steve Larmer follows the play Monday.

spoiled Dallas's home opener.

Dmitri Mironov and Todd Gill, the latter with an unassisted power-play goal, scored for Toronto. The Stars finally broke through against Potvin early in the third period when Russ Courtnall spoiled the shutout bid by poking Craig Ludwig's rebound into the net.

Red Wings 4, Oilers 2
Ray Sheppard's sixth goal of the season snapped a 2-2 tie early in the third period and led visiting Detroit to its victory. It was Edmonton's fourth straight loss.
Sheppard's shot from the top of the face-off circle went into the top right-hand corner.

Mike Krushelnyski completed the scoring when he fired the puck through the Edmonton goalie's legs.

MONDAY'S RESULTS:
Florida 2, Boston 1
N.Y. Rangers 6, Ottawa 2
Toronto 2, Dallas 1
Detroit 4, Edmonton 2
San Jose 2, Chicago 1

300,000 fans welcome champion 49ers home

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) - With fans craning their necks from office building windows and others climbing trees for a better view, a jubilant crowd of some 300,000 Monday welcomed home the Super Bowl champion San Francisco 49ers.

"We are No. 1 in the world, baby!" bellowed 49ers tackle Steve Wallace.

Wallace spoke through a microphone borrowed from a television crew during the victory parade through downtown San Francisco to hail the team's record fifth Super Bowl title.

The well-behaved crowd contrasted with Sunday night's booze-fueled outburst, which ended in 183 arrests, most for minor alcohol-related offenses. Two men received minor gunshot wounds and one girl was stabbed.

In 1990, when San Francisco last won the Super Bowl, at least 14 people were treated for injuries related to the postgame celebration. Seven were stabbed, four were shot and three were in traffic accidents.

Acting California Gov. Gray Davis declared Monday "49ers Day" statewide. Davis, the state's lieutenant governor, is filling in while Gov. Pete Wilson is out of the state.

Davis presented the official proclamation to owner Edward DeBartolo Jr. before the start of the parade.

Fans strained for a glimpse of quarterback Steve Young, wide receiver Jerry Rice and the rest of the players, who arrived just



HOMEcoming KING - San Francisco 49ers quarterback Steve Young waves to thousands of fans during a parade in San Francisco Monday.

hours earlier from Miami.

Spectators stood at least 10 deep in a light drizzle on the parade route along Market Street in the heart of San Francisco. Hundreds of red and gold balloons fashioned into arcs were positioned over the street every block or so.

In the first car, DeBartolo held aloft the gleaming silver Super Bowl trophy. He was joined in the convertible by 49ers coach George Seifert and San Francisco Mayor Frank Jordan.

Deion Sanders, in a black baseball cap worn slightly askew and sunglasses, drew shrieks from de-

lighted fans. As Rice rode by, the crowd chanted "Jerry! Jerry! Jerry!"

The 49ers' 49-26 blowout of the San Diego Chargers on Sunday settled the only real question left for 49er fans after beating Dallas in the NFC championship game - is this the best team in the NFL, or is it the best team in the history of the NFL?

Rosa Mora had the answer as she waved a 49ers flag over police barriers. "It's the best team in history - definitely," she said.

Chargers cheered Under a bright Southern California sky and beside a sparkling blue har-

bor, the wounded San Diego Chargers returned home Monday - and suddenly life didn't look quite so grim.

"We took a licking, but there'll be another day," coach Bobby Ross said. "I've told the players, what we have to do is just put that game behind us."

Tens of thousands of fans poured into downtown San Diego on Monday to start that very process.

Welcoming their team from a devastating loss, the hometown crowd cheered and screamed, waved flags and "holed" and tried to reassure the Chargers all is not so bleak.

"It's a nice welcome, after we did a not-so-good job," said tight end Duane Young, his smile small and pained.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Mansell-McLaren deal soon official

Nigel Mansell's return to Formula One with the McLaren-Mercedes team is expected to be announced Friday.

Mansell, the former Formula One and Indy-car champion, has reportedly agreed to a \$5-million contract with the England-based team for the 1995 season.

Romario World Player of the Year

Brazilian striker Romario was voted 1994 World Player of the Year at the FIFA annual awards ceremony on Monday.

Bulgarian striker Hristo Stoichkov came second in a vote by more than 100 national coaches.

Italy's Roberto Baggio, winner last year, was third.

Crawley confirms fitness for final Test

England batsman John Crawley confirmed yesterday he will be fit for the fifth and final Test against Australia starting on Friday despite sustaining a neck injury during the tourists' fourth Test triumph.

Crawley was unable to field after he was injured while scoring 71 on Monday before England secured a 106-run win in Adelaide.

Baseball still deadlocked

One week before US President Bill Clinton's deadline for progress toward settling the baseball strike, neither owners nor players appeared willing to budge much.

Owners began arriving Monday night and management's negotiating committee was scheduled to meet yesterday. The union's negotiating committee met for about six hours Monday and about 60 players were expected for an executive board meeting yesterday, the day before talks resume.

Last Thursday, Clinton ordered talks to resume and set a February 6 deadline for progress toward a deal.

Another arrest in Italian soccer stabbing

As Italians prepared for the first canceled soccer round since 1945, police yesterday arrested a second teenager in the stabbing death of a Genoa fan which sparked riots and shocked the country.

Milan police said a 17-year-old youth, identified as M.G., was charged with lending the alleged killer the knife used to stab Vincenzo Spagnolo, 25.

Kippas cause controversy

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Rules on religious head wear in the US and particularly the state of California could be changed soon because of a controversy surrounding an Orthodox Jewish school's basketball team's practice of wearing kippas during games.

A commissioner for the California Interscholastic Federation - the governing body for high school sports in the state - said he wants the rules clarified in order to prevent a repeat of several incidents in which members of the Valley Torah High School basketball team were told not to wear their skull-caps during games.

Dean Crowley, the southern section commissioner, had written a letter granting the players permission to wear the kippas, but officials still ordered them to remove the kippas or risk forfeiting the game.

The team complied the first time in a season opener at Calvary Baptist in La Verne, but refused the second time in a December 19 game at Whitney High in Cerritos. After a 40-minute delay, the referee reluctantly proceeded with that game.

Officials contended they were motivated by safety because of the kippas' metal clips. Support for the school "has been fantastic," said Carlos Ramos, secular principal and athletic director at Valley Torah.

SCOREBOARD

BASKETBALL - Hapoel Tel Aviv beat Israhel's Pithulach 91-87 at Utsikha last night in the European Cup final pool.

Barkley leads Suns past Cavs

CLEVELAND (AP) - Charles Barkley scored 20 points, including the clinching basket with just over a minute left, as the Phoenix Suns beat the Cleveland Cavaliers 89-82 Monday night.

The Suns finished off a 4-1 road trip and won for the 13th time in 15 games.

Neither team built a double-digit lead at any point in the game, which featured six technical fouls on the Suns and two on the Cavs - all for illegal defenses. Danny Manning and Dan Majerle each scored 14 points for the Suns.

Terrell Brandon, who missed the previous four games with a sprained wrist, led the Cavs with 20 points. Danny Ferry scored 17 - six on technical foul shots - and John Williams had 16.

Jazz 115, Timberwolves 80
John Stockton had 14 assists Monday night, leaving him 11 shy of Magic Johnson's career NBA assists mark, as host Utah stretched its winning streak to 13 games.

Karl Malone led the Jazz with 25 points. Isiah Rider paced Minnesota with 19 points as the Timberwolves

lost for the seventh time in their last 11 games.

Stockton, who scored 11 points, had 12 assists in the first half and could have come closer to Johnson's record mark of 9,921 assists had he played more of the second half. Stockton, who has 9,911 assists, sat out all but two minutes of the fourth quarter.

Sonics 109, 76ers 104
Sam Perkins scored a season-high 31 points as the Supersonics won their seventh straight road game with a come-from-behind victory.

It was the fourth straight game that the 76ers, losers of 15 of their last 17, lost a game in the final minute. The Sonics, who trailed by 15 with 8:28 left, took the lead for good on Gary Payton's driving layup with 31 seconds left.

Detlef Schrempf had 23 points for Seattle. Dana Barros had 19 points to lead the 76ers, and Scott Williams added 14 points and 13 rebounds.

Hawks 95, Heat 92
Former heat guard Steve Smith hit a 3-pointer with 30.6 seconds remaining to lift visiting Atlanta to victory.

MONDAY'S RESULTS:
Seattle 109, Philadelphia 104
Atlanta 95, Miami 92
Phoenix 109, Cleveland 82
Detroit 102, L.A. Clippers 95
Utah 115, Minnesota 80
New Jersey 99, Portland 98

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct.	GB
Orlando	35	8	.814	-
New York	27	14	.659	7
Boston	16	26	.381	18.5
New Jersey	17	29	.370	19.5
Miami	14	28	.333	20.5
Washington	11	28	.282	22
Philadelphia	12	31	.279	23

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct.	GB
Charlotte	28	16	.639	-
Cleveland	26	18	.591	1
Indiana	24	17	.585	1.5
Chicago	21	21	.500	5
Atlanta	19	24	.442	7.5
Memphis	16	28	.361	10
Detroit	14	28	.330	11

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Midwest Division				
	W	L	Pct.	GB
Utah	33	10	.767	-
San Antonio	25	14	.641	6
Houston	25	15	.625	6.5
Denver	19	22	.463	13
Dallas	16	24	.400	15.5
Minnesota	10	32	.238	22.5

Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct.	GB
Phoenix	34	9	.791	-
Seattle	28	11	.725	3.5
L.A. Lakers	26	13	.667	6
Sacramento	24	17	.585	9
Portland	22	19	.537	11
Golden State	12	27	.308	20
L.A. Clippers	7	37	.158	27.5

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FOUR FRIDAYS NIS 398.30 for 10 words (minimum) each additional word - NIS 39.83
MONTHLY (24 insertions) NIS 526.50 10 words (minimum) each additional word - NIS 52.65

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GENERAL

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SITS. VAC.

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Take-home pay shrinks, but there will be more to spend

JOSE ROSENFELD

OVER a million and a half wage earners will get their paychecks today and find their take-home pay has shrunk, mostly due to the new health tax.

However, most people who have been paying dues to their health funds will see that the health tax is lower than the dues it replaces. As such, nearly everyone's disposable income, when health expenditures are taken into account, will rise.

The only people, other than the very wealthy, who will be in for a very unpleasant surprise, will be the many Kupat Holim Clalit members who benefited from large health-fee discounts.

Based on the figures in the accompanying table, it appears that working married women will be paying more for health care. A married woman grossing NIS 2,800 a month will pay NIS 100 in health taxes, compared to NIS 99 in health dues before the reform. However, the

Treasury's decision to give these women an additional tax credit point - worth NIS 121 - more than makes up the difference.

Families in health funds other than Clalit will see a larger drop in their health bill. A couple earning NIS 6,800 a month enrolled in Kupat Holim Meuhedet who were paying NIS 444, will pay NIS 257 now; those earning NIS 10,200 a month will now only pay NIS 420.

Kupat Holim Maccabi couples in the same income categories were paying NIS 356 and NIS 497, respectively, and Kupat Holim Leumi members, NIS 344 and NIS 474.

According to a Treasury simulation based on government employees' wages, this year's tax changes will affect wages in the following way: individuals and married women earning up to

NIS 13,000 a month will not see a reduction in their net income, as well as a couple earning up to NIS 22,500 a month.

January's salaries will be affected by reforms to income and National Insurance Institute (NII) taxes, the imposition of the new health and organization taxes, and a 5.2 percent tax bracket adjustment for inflation.

The second stage of the income tax reform will cut NIS 800 million in taxes this year by broadening the tax brackets through the elimination of the 35% tax bracket. The changes expand the 30% tax bracket by NIS 1,870 and the 45% bracket by NIS 2,820, which will translate in a net income increase of between NIS 65 and NIS 300 per individual.

The NII employee tax reform reduces the tax paid on the first NIS 2,042 earned to 2.66%, and any income over that amount is

taxed at 4.9%, instead of the previous flat fee of 5.35%. However, the tax coverage now includes all salary elements such as car allowances, overtime, and the like that were previously exempted and which make up on average about 13% of wages. In addition, the ceiling for NII taxable income has been increased from three times the mean wage to four times, or NIS 16,332.

Similarly, the new health-tax ceiling will be identical to the NII ceiling, a significant increase over the health-fund income ceiling that ranged between NIS 9,300 and NIS 10,000. Under the new law, the first NIS 2,042 are taxed at 3.1% and any additional income is taxed at 4.8%. The maximum payment a month will thus be NIS 749 per wage earner.

The new organization tax amounts to 0.9% of Histadrut or union members' wages, up to a ceiling of NIS 6,070, or 0.7% for non-members.

TAX CHANGES AS REFLECTED IN JANUARY 1995 PAYCHECKS (in NIS)

	Gross Wages	Income Tax	NII Tax	Health Tax /Dues	Organization Tax	Net Wages
Husband Before	3,000	250	140	144	27	2,456
After		208	101	109		2,554
Wife Before	2,100	0	98	99	19	1,903
After		0	57	67		1,957
Husband Before	4,000	550	186	193	36	3,071
After		508	150	157		3,149
Wife Before	2,800	104	130	99	25	2,467
After		71	91	100		2,513
Husband Before	5,000	892	233	242	45	3,633
After		808	199	205		3,743
Wife Before	3,500	344	163	120	32	2,873
After		281	126	133		2,928
Husband Before	6,000	1,262	279	277	54	4,182
After		1,108	248	253		4,337
Wife Before	3,500	344	163	120	32	2,873
After		281	126	133		2,928
Husband Before	10,000	3,113	465	386	55	6,036
After		2,905	444	445		6,151
Wife Before	7,000	1,657	326	219	55	4,798
After		1,478	287	301		4,869
Husband Before	20,000	8,113	629	412	55	10,846
After		7,815	755	749		10,625
Wife Before	14,000	5,058	629	291	55	8,022
After		4,738	640	637		7,930

The table relates to a working couple with two children where the wife earns 70 percent of her husband's gross income. The health dues reflect the rates of Kupat Holim Clalit, which insures about 70% of the population. Clalit, however, provides discounts to a significant portion of its members, so members with discounts may pay more starting in January than before, even in cases where the health tax is lower than Clalit's regular rates. Actual net payments, in most cases, will be lower, reflecting employee contributions to pension and training funds (*Avonot Histadrut*). The organization tax is a new tax, which was previously included in Clalit's health dues. The table assumes that the workers are Histadrut or union members, who are required to pay an organization tax of 0.9% for gross income of up to NIS 6,070. Non-union members working in an establishment covered by the new tax will be required to pay 0.7%.



Uzi Meshulam makes a point outside Tel Aviv District Court yesterday. (Alon Ron/Israel Sun)

Meshulam, followers convicted

RAINE MARCUS

UZI Meshulam and 11 of his followers were convicted yesterday of 12 out of 14 counts of conspiracy, endangering lives, possessing and manufacturing illegal weapons, threats, aggravated assault, shooting at police officers, and other charges.

But Meshulam, who had refused to attend seven trial sessions, also refused to hear Tel Aviv District Court Judge Amnon Strashnov read the verdict, despite attempts by Strashnov to persuade him to stay.

"We don't recognize the state or its courts," said Meshulam. "This trial has been fixed."

The charges arose out of incidents last March, when Meshulam and around 100 followers, protesting the alleged "disappearance and sale of 4,000 Yemenite children," stockpiled weapons and barricaded themselves in a Yehud house, which they turned into a fortress.

The siege was ended by police two months later. One of Meshulam's supporters, 19-year old Shlomo Assoulin, was killed by a sharpshooter when he fired at a police helicopter.

Referring to the defendants' refusal to participate in hearings,

Strashnov described the trial as "extraordinary and very strange." Meshulam, he said, grasps reality "in a different way than other people."

"He makes mountains out of molehills, and he suffers from a persecution complex. His claims that he is haunted by the General Security Service, which wants to cover up the Yemenite children affair, have proven totally false," he said.

Even if Meshulam and his followers were fighting for a cause, he added, the means did not justify the ends. "In fact, in this case the means desecrated the ends," he said, before reading his verdict.

After 32 prosecution witnesses out of more than 100 had testified during the trial, Meshulam ordered his lawyers, Simha Ziv and Tsadok Hugi, to refrain from cross-examining witnesses.

Convicting all 12 defendants on a conspiracy charge, Strashnov ruled that Meshulam was the undisputed leader, and that his followers did not "move without getting his approval." Thus, they all acted as partners, he said.

Meshulam's claims that he carried two unlicensed pistols for self-defense were unfounded, said Strashnov. "He created the situation in which he carried pistols and stored an arsenal of other dangerous weapons," he said.

However, he cleared Meshulam on two counts of assaulting a police officer and negligence, saying they could not be proven beyond a reasonable doubt because of inconsistent evidence.

After the verdict, Ziv and Tsadok said that if they had cross-examined more witnesses, Strashnov would have acquitted their clients on more than two counts.

"We proved that witnesses lied," they said. "The rabbi [Meshulam, who is not in fact ordained] has been done a grave injustice."

Ziv and Hugi said that they would consider an appeal to the Supreme Court after they have studied the 90-page verdict.

Strashnov set sentencing for February 16, and urged Ziv and Hugi to persuade their clients to produce character witnesses in their favor.

"Rabbi Meshulam is not afraid of sentencing," said Ziv. "In fact he said the more [years in jail] he gets, the better."

Possession of illegal weapons carries a maximum 10-year sentence, while endangering lives carries a maximum 20-year sentence.

Verdict given under tight guard

RAINE MARCUS

POLICE were taking no chances yesterday, and huge forces of uniformed, plainclothes, and border policemen secured Tel Aviv District Court, where Uzi Meshulam's followers had rioted during previous hearings.

A metal detector was erected at the entrance to Judge Amnon Strashnov's courtroom, and police were extremely tense, losing their tempers easily and preventing people from entering. They conducted intensive searches inside and outside the courtroom and were surprised when a few minutes before the verdict was due to be read, only around 40 family members and followers turned up. Meshulam, said one of his followers, had ordered his spokesperson, Ora Shifris and others to stay home.

Meshulam's wife, Elisheva, did not seem too perturbed after she received the news that her husband had just been convicted on 12 counts, including possessing illegal weapons, shooting at police officers, and endangering lives, which carries a maximum 20-year-prison sentence.

"He won't spend an extra day in jail, above the time he has already been in detention," she said, vowing vengeance on police for "giving false evidence" and on Strashnov for convicting him. "You'll see, we'll make sure they [Judge Strashnov and police] will all go to jail for 20 years," she said.

Meanwhile, other followers still insisted that Ashkenazim were responsible for the disappearance and sale of Yemenite children. "I had 10 kids," shouted one man. "Two of them disappeared. So where did they go?"

Inside the courtroom Meshulam did not disappoint the crowd. "Don't you want to hear the verdict?" asked Strashnov. "We already know it," he replied. "Let's get on and play this democratic game so you can get appointed to the Supreme Court. If we stay here, we'll only sing. It's Rosh Hodesh today."

41% of women who start small businesses are new immigrants

BATSHEVA TSUR

SOME 41 percent of the women who start small businesses are new immigrants despite the fact that only 11% of the population are immigrants, Absorption Minister Yair Tzaban said yesterday.

He was speaking at a Tel Aviv conference of women entrepreneurs who immigrated from the former Soviet Union.

Altogether, more than 10,500 persons have approached the Small Business Development Centers to start businesses in the past three years, Tzaban said. The centers were initiated by the IDC.

She pointed out that only 45%

of immigrant women from the CIS had found work and that less than half of these were working in their professions, so private entrepreneurship was becoming a more viable alternative.

Quoting research from abroad, which found that entrepreneurs were usually ready to begin a business in a new country after 4-5 years, Godrov predicted that the present trend was likely to continue. There are currently 15 centers nationwide, she said.

Tzaban said that the percentage of women immigrants who ask for help from the Small Business Development Centers is the same as that of the male olim. He said he planned to make the ministry's funding of the centers conditional on the appointment of at least one woman to the directorate of every such center in the country.

Some 20% of the women entrepreneurs opened dental clinics, Tzaban noted, while 19% were involved in fashion, and 12% in cosmetics and beauty.

The rate of entrepreneurship is three times higher among olim than among veteran Israelis, Zvi Amit of the Chambers of Commerce told the conference participants.

KNESSET BRIEFS

First reading of deportation bill

The opposition is planning to turn out in force today for the reading of Likud MK Zahi Hanegbi's bill that would allow the families of terrorists to be deported. "The law is aimed at clearly showing suicide terrorists that their planned actions will cause misery to their families and cause them to be immediately removed from their lands," Hanegbi said.

Bill would bar MKs from being directors

The House Committee yesterday approved the final draft of a bill by MK Ori Orr (Labor) to prevent MKs from serving as directors on the boards of companies, public institutions, or non-profit organizations without special permission - to be issued only if there were no conflict of interests involved. The bill is to have its second and third readings within the next fortnight.

Law gives adoptive parents equal rights

Under a law which passed last night, parents who adopt a child under the age of 10 will be eligible for the same allotments as biological parents. "The law rectifies a serious wrong against adoptive parents," said MK Anat Maor (Meretz), who initiated the bill. Originally the bill said the grant would be given to the adopting mother, but it was later amended to apply to parents of either sex.

Liat Collins

IDF will allow deferral for bagrut

THE IDF will allow those who have not completed their matriculation exams to defer enlistment for one year, Maj.-Gen. Yoram Yair, head of the Manpower Branch, announced yesterday.

At present, Yair said, high-school students must delay retaking matriculation exams until after they finish military service. (*Itim*)

Winning cards and numbers

IN yesterday's Mifal Hapayis daily Chance card draw, the lucky cards were the nine of spades, king of hearts, eight of diamonds, and jack of clubs.

In last night's weekly Lotto drawing, the winning numbers were 6, 7, 15, 17, 42 and 49, while the additional number was 32.

New Jerusalem neighborhood expected to be approved

BILL HUTMAN

CONSTRUCTION of a new Jewish neighborhood at Har Homa in southern Jerusalem, under consideration for over five

years, is expected to be approved today by the city's planning committee.

The municipal spokesman announced that Har Homa would be on the committee's agenda, and that, in a rare move, the meeting would be open to the media because of the great public interest in the plan.

"This will be the biggest plan ever approved by the committee," said deputy mayor Uri Lupoliansky, who is committee chairman.

Some 6,500 housing units, plus

schools and other public buildings, parks, and commercial and industrial zones are to be built at Har Homa, Lupoliansky said.

The entire project is slated for land annexed to Jerusalem after the Six Day War, and later expropriated largely from Jewish landowners.

Public protests and petitions to the High Court of Justice by both Arabs and Jews against the plan slowed up its implementation.

"Lupoliansky said the strong coalition majority on the committee ensured easy passage of the Har Homa plan.

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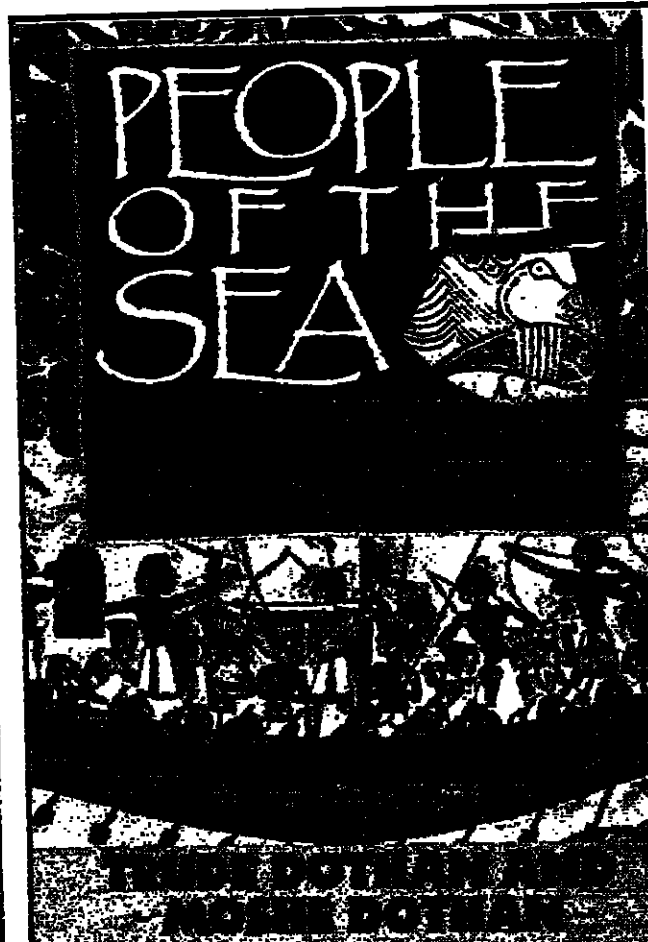
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